

“The Language Ghost”: Linguistic Heritage and Collective Identity
Among the Monacan Indians of Central Virginia

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates indigenous language ideologies that have emerged in the Monacan Indian Nation, a tribe of about 2500 people located near the Blue Ridge Mountains in central Virginia. It also presents, from a tribal member's perspective, the history and ethnography of the people, whose ancestral language was Siouan. That language was closely related to Tutelo, a language documented by Horatio Hale that is no longer spoken. The study involved interviews and observation at public Monacan-sponsored cultural events and in private settings to investigate whether cultural particularities apply to the language ideologies that were discovered. Of the three positions identified as separate language ideologies, one could be said to fit within Western frameworks of assumptions, one is culturally specific, and the third falls somewhere in between. The study uses a table presented in Susan Gal's (1979) model of language shift in Oberwart, Austria, to demonstrate the existence of the "language ghost" through categories of interlocutors that disappeared when the speakers shifted from their ancestral language to English. In cases of indigenous language reclamation projects around the world, the community's level of commitment and participation have emerged as the single most important factor necessary to achieve the project's goals, regardless of the group's population or level of fluency. The study questions whether, at this point, a Monacan language reclamation project would be likely to succeed, given the points of disjuncture (Meek 2010) evident in competing language ideologies within the community.

PREFACE

As an anthropologist, I am not without bias. I am an American Indian researcher who has for years been interested in language and in preserving or resurrecting cultural practices. I question whether any research is unbiased or objective, because investigators so often remain unaware of their own assumptions involving themselves and their own cultures as well as people they categorize as “other.” I am not an “other.” I am a member of the Monacan Indian Nation, located in central Virginia in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. “Monacan” may or may not be our term for ourselves, referring perhaps to our communities near the rivers: “water” is translated as “mani” in Tutelo, which we claim as our ancestral language. We called ourselves “Yesá¹” (Hale 1883), which means “The People.” To us, everyone else is an “other.”

For six years, from 1995 through 2000, I wrote grants and directed a historical research project for the Monacan Indian Nation with funds obtained from the federal Administration for Native Americans. Each year, we submitted a new competitive grant, and each year we received funding to conduct comprehensive, exhaustive historical research geared toward the federal acknowledgement process of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs. For several years, I stayed at the home of my colleague, Diane Johns Shields, three days a week, while we worked on numerous tribal projects as well as historical research at the Monacan tribal center, near Bear Mountain in Amherst. I then returned to my home in Fredericksburg, two and a half hours away. After leaving the full-time employment of the tribe, I continued to write grant requests and to help administer

projects. Over the course of eight years, I wrote successful grant requests totaling more than \$600,000. I sat on the Monacan Tribal Council for twelve years. I edited the tribal newsletter for two years. In addition, I served on the Virginia Council on Indians, an advisory council to the Governor, for eight years and as its Chairman for four years, from 2004 to 2008, and I remain involved at a national level with numerous American Indian organizations. I have worked for the Association on American Indian Affairs, one of the oldest Native advocacy organizations in the country, as a repatriation specialist, and with the National Museum of the American Indian, as a project researcher.

This level of participation in tribal and intercultural American Indian activities created an unusual situation as I later came to focus my research around my own people. I am well-known to those Monacans who participate in tribal activities. I have also played a part in tribal politics as various factions developed and dissipated over the years. So I am an insider, in a sense, and this is important, because Monacan people have grown to distrust outsiders and their scholarly projects, a distrust that has its basis in denigrating historical experiences discussed later in this study. At the same time, because my family moved away from the Monacan community at Bear Mountain several generations ago and I was raised outside of that community, I am and will always remain something of an outsider, not part of the core group that remained in the homeland and fought to maintain an American Indian identity despite vicious persecution during various periods of our history. My level of education also makes me suspect within the Monacan community at Bear Mountain, because the vast majority of Monacan people had no access to schooling beyond the seventh grade until 1963, and although many finish high school in contemporary times, few complete undergraduate educations and even fewer pursue

postgraduate degrees. I am a mixed-race, fairly light-skinned member of the Monacan people who has never lived full time in Amherst County. I have been embraced and loved by some of the tribal elders and have benefited from their instruction. Their voices, and those of some who came before them, permeate this work. I hope I have done them some justice.

The desire to speak their ancestral language remains strong with some Monacans. Jeffrey Hantman, a University of Virginia archaeologist who has worked with the Monacan tribe for most of his career, noted that when he first approached the tribe about doing archaeological survey work, people asked what had happened to their language and whether he could help them to recover it. It seems this was a more pressing priority for them than learning about the sites of Monacan communities of the past, perhaps because those sites represent only the past, but speaking an ancestral Native language ties the past to the present and the community to their own ancestors, with whom they can no longer imagine speaking.

INTRODUCTION

When I began graduate study, my intention was to collect information about Tutelo, a language closely related to the ancestral Monacan language, and to begin the process of language restoration within the Monacan community, where that language had not been spoken for about a hundred years, or so we thought at the time. I quickly discovered that a grammar and dictionary of Tutelo, compiled by Guilia Oliverio (1996), already incorporated all known work on the Tutelo language by a number of linguists including Edward Sapir.

It also became apparent over my course of study that the process of language reclamation is an arduous one, and that before we began, perhaps it would be a good idea to discover what was important to Monacan people about the language, and in which contexts they wanted to be able to use it. Joshua Fishman's (1991) concept of "prior ideological clarification," which I discuss more fully in Chapter 1, indicates the necessity of first undertaking an honest assessment of the meaning of such a project, in order to clarify community goals and assess the level of commitment of potential participants. Before launching a project that would require their full commitment and interest, I wanted to know how Monacan people saw their ancestral language, why they wanted it, in which contexts it appeared most important and, if full and fluent recovery proved unrealistic, what might constitute a meaningful recovery effort for them. I also wanted to know whether the community was in agreement about its linguistic goals.

The concept of identity was quick to emerge from this line of thinking. Monacans are a familial group, and tribal members are required to trace their genealogy to a person who is “on the original rolls,” a list of community members that dates back to the mid-eighteenth century. A Monacan tribal identity is therefore both inherent and intentional; it cannot be obtained in any other way but by establishing oneself as a member of an extended “blood” family and by applying through the Tribal Council for membership. But genealogy is only part of a Native identity, and Monacan people recognize that much of their cultural knowledge has been lost or abandoned. Speaking their Native language could confer, both within and outside the community, a sense of authenticity not currently available to Monacan people.

Since discovering their historical identity as Siouan-speaking people, some Monacans have begun to research Siouan tribal histories, and several have visited Western Siouan tribes, particularly the Oglala Lakota at Pine Ridge Reservation, hoping to learn more about their own culture. Others, including me, have researched the Tutelo language, which was closely related to the Monacan language. We found archives at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia that contain Tutelo songs, Oliverio’s grammar and dictionary, a book by the well-known anthropologist Frank Speck (1942) documenting some of the intricate rituals practiced historically by the Tutelo, and some descendants of Tutelo people who still live in Brantford, Ontario.

Methodology

I engaged in a research study designed to discover how language use and access to an ancestral language relates to Monacan people's own sense of identity as tribal members. Over the course of a year, I talked with Monacan people who attended two public festivals sponsored by the tribe, as well as engaging in casual conversations with numerous others at tribal meetings and in informal contexts. From those conversations I selected specific individuals for further in-depth interviews, deliberately choosing those who articulated divergent perspectives.

Many Monacans were already aware that the Tutelo language has been documented and recorded, and different views are held by various factions of the tribe. Some people are interested in learning Tutelo fluently, some for specific purposes only, such as praying, or being able to speak simple phrases or names of animals. Others reject the notion of acquiring competency in the ancestral language completely. Still other are interested in Indian languages in general or in learning Lakota in particular as a pan-Indian language that is distantly related to other Siouan languages.

My intention was to engage individuals in conversations about language during discussions about tribal culture, while attending tribal events—monthly tribal and Council meetings and weekly Culture classes held during winter months. As it turned out, I did not collect data at Culture classes, which met irregularly and which were poorly suited to my purposes, because participants were engaged with the cultural activities. I collected data from tribal members who live elsewhere as they participated in two public festivals, the Annual Powwow in May and the Homecoming event in October.

Those who participated were enrolled tribal members from a population of about 1,700 at that time. Fewer than half of all tribal members live in or near Amherst County, Virginia. They are engaged in typical American blue-collar employment, for the most part. Others live outside the tribal community and return to Amherst to visit, as members of the extended family that constitutes the tribe. I included adults of all ages, to obtain as representative a sample as possible and to identify possible differences between elderly and younger tribal members.

I spent extended periods in the community, staying with friends overnight and interacting with tribal members during tribal events. I spoke with people individually, in small groups, and in crowded public gatherings. I noted what people said about language, ancestral or otherwise, and documented people's feelings about language recovery.

In the in-depth interviews, I asked people to talk about their feelings regarding the ancestral tribal language, the shift to English, other American Indian languages that might be suitable for language classes, and whether they think language is an important element of culture. In each case, tribal members were notified that I was conducting a study and asked whether they wished to participate voluntarily.

In some cases, interviewees needed little prompting. In others, I had to ask questions, which included the following: Is it important to you for Monacans to speak an Indian language? Is it important for them to speak Tutelo? In what settings would it be important to speak an Indian language? In what settings would (Lakota, Tutelo) be appropriate? When you speak (Tutelo, Lakota, English), whom do you address? Whom

did your ancestors address? Do you pray? In what language? If you were to learn (Tutelo, Lakota), what would you want to be able to say? When would you use the language?

To record my observations during conversations, I used handwritten field notes. For in-depth interviews, I used audio recordings. I initially collected some identifying information about individuals, including names, because it was necessary in evaluating responses that might be particular to a certain age group or area of residence to know the age and gender of the participants, as well as where they live and their relationships to others within or outside the tribal community.

I ascertained that, through persistent transmission of cultural understandings, most Monacan people continue to identify as members of an extended family, and with their homeland—the tribal area at Bear Mountain in particular— as the place they came from and most naturally belong. Those whose families remained in the tribal area perceive themselves as being different and perhaps more “valid” than those whose families moved away, because the Bear Mountain group continued to experience oppression collectively within the larger community, while those who moved away were able to escape racial stigmatization by changing the spellings of their surnames and sometimes by “passing as white.”

Interestingly, the few remaining descendants of the Tutelo people who left Virginia in the mid-1700s and ended up in Ontario are not perceived by the Bear Mountain community members in that same disparaging way as those who left recently and through choice, but as even more “valid” relations whose ancestors suffered as much or more than the Monacans did and who were able to retain their language long enough to

have it preserved. The language itself is treated as a highly sacred and precious legacy to much of the community, with the exception of a few churchgoers and younger people who apparently see it as a “primitive” vestige of a collective past.

A number of tribal members— from the group that stayed as well as those that left—articulate a profound sense of loss in their inability to communicate with their surroundings, and with each other, in their original language. Notions about the cultural effects of language loss and “salvage linguistics” among American Indians have been explored by Boas and numerous others since the late 1800s, but the past two decades or so of literature on American Indian language revitalization, which I summarize in Chapter One, is especially relevant here. Many Native peoples feel profoundly tied to the land where they live, which is not perceived as a two-dimensional “landscape” but as an animate, interactive presence. Posey notes, “For indigenous peoples, the main significance of their knowledge systems is that their connection to the land and the relationships and obligations that arise from that connection are the core of their identity” (2001:386). When indigenous people lose access to their ancestral language, those connections, and some of those relationships, are at risk. Consequently, people’s sense of identity may be threatened, and they may seek to revive the language or to find another that can take its place. This study investigates such a case.

For Monacan people, the inability to express themselves in the language of their ancestors is felt, by many members, not only as the loss of ethnolinguistic conventions and the intellectual wealth encoded therein, nor as the loss of their history embodied in orally transmitted narratives. It is felt, I believe, as the loss of *relationships*— relationships with one another, with their ancestors, and with the natural world.

I have theorized that there exists within the Monacan construction of identity a *language ghost* that continues to separate tribal members culturally from those around them and to unite them as a people. My research explores the nature of the language ghost—a sense of lost sacred relationships because of the loss of language—among members of the Monacan Nation. The study sought to determine how, among Monacans, the ancestral language is conceived: as a presence, in terms of the continued existence of linguistic forms or practice; as an absence, a sense of shared loss; or perhaps as something else. I was also interested in examining specific instances of disjuncture that might occur between tribal members with competing language ideologies; and how tribal members wish to proceed, if they do, in conceptualizing and developing a language reclamation project.

There are several reasons for telling the story of Monacan people and their language in the way that I have chosen here. Among our people and in many other Native societies where information was transmitted orally for generations, stories carry tremendous respect and need to be told in a certain way, with utmost attention to historical authenticity and to the unfolding of the narrative. The story begins at the beginning, or as far back as it may reasonably be traced, and as it is told, elders and revered leaders are expected to affirm the telling through their verbal agreement. Because I am telling the story of my people here, doing so from a Native perspective, I want to follow that convention as closely as possible, to honor the ancestors and our claim to their cultural legacy. I also wish to tell the story as completely as possible simply because it's one that has not been fully told from a scholarly perspective. Samuel Cook's book, *Monacans and Miners* (2000), comes closest to encapsulating the history of Monacan

people, but it is not written from the perspective of a tribal member and does not discuss the contemporary Monacan community or language issues in detail. Perhaps the most compelling reason for tracing the story from its beginning, however, is the Monacan attachment to their own sacred history, the various kinds of persecution they've endured, and their need for others to know what that felt like. As one elderly Monacan woman noted,

You didn't grow up here, you can't know how it was for us. How we was treated like dogs, worse than dogs. Calling us Issues and all that, like we weren't even human. No wonder they stopped speaking the language, doing things that would draw attention. You have to feel for what our people been through.

The potential benefit of this study to Monacan community members is that at some future point the tribe may be able to focus on a language recovery project specifically based on their own priorities, with a realistic set of expectations. In a larger context, I hope this study can be used to consider ways in which American Indian language ideologies can illuminate the process of constructing or reconstructing notions of peoplehood within a tribal group, creating a perhaps disjunctive yet evolving sense of shared identity that has survived centuries of state-sanctioned efforts to eradicate it.

CHAPTER ONE

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE ENDANGERMENT, MONACAN LANGUAGE OBSOLESCENCE

Indigenous communities all over the world can point to similar significant changes resulting from their contact, and their involuntary long-term involvement, with European or other colonizing societies during the past 500 years or so. While the global, contemporary experience of colonialism is now considered more extractive in terms of resources and labor (as opposed to “settler colonialism,” in which indigenous peoples were removed to make room for new inhabitants), that involvement has typically led to changes in population demographics and to transformations in speech patterns resulting in language shift to varying degrees, or to language endangerment. Over the course of several generations, sometimes even over several centuries, the indigenous language becomes diminished in use and eventually ceases to be spoken. In this chapter I investigate cases of indigenous language revitalization and reclamation projects—where the language is either endangered or has already ceased being spoken and where the community has decided to focus efforts on teaching members the language—to see whether those projects have met with success, and whether common issues can be identified when projects proved unsuccessful. I also briefly review the existing literature as to why language endangerment is important from both global and local perspectives.

UNESCO (2010) and other authorities generally assert that of roughly 7,000 languages spoken in 250 nations throughout the world, more than half might be abandoned within a century. For indigenous communities, this prediction presents a grim

picture indeed. Their languages usually reside in small place-based communities, reserves, or reservations and lack national status or social “prestige.” As colonial powers of the past and now modern socioeconomic pressures have borne down on these dwindling communities, people have felt intense pressure to abandon languages associated with their low socioeconomic status and perceived cultural “backwardness.” Dorian (1998) notes,

It’s fairly common for a language to become so exclusively associated with low-prestige people and their socially disfavored identities that its own potential speakers prefer to distance themselves from it and adopt some other language.

Typically, the new language is the one favored by government, education, business, and popular culture. Unlike the situation of immigrants, whose heritage languages are not endangered in their home countries, indigenous speakers have nowhere to go to learn or revitalize their languages if they wish (Hinton 2001). Without impassioned motivation on the part of community members, and even sometimes in its presence, the community’s fluent speakers die or cease speaking their language, and the language disappears. The threat of language death is heartbreakingly described by Perley (2011), who describes it as “language suicide” and others; for many indigenous groups, it has already occurred.

Such is the case for the community at the center of this study, the Monacan Indian Nation of central Virginia, a once-populous and politically powerful alliance of Siouan-speaking communities that inhabited the piedmont and mountain regions, which constitutes roughly two thirds of Virginia’s present land base. Their communities initially

resisted involvement with the English colonists who interacted with Algonquian-speaking peoples to the east, but by the turn of the eighteenth century, colonial settlers began to usurp their homelands while epidemics and hostilities disrupted their social structures. Their communities dwindled, were repeatedly displaced, and reconstituted themselves among members of other tribes. Today, the Monacan Nation is a state-recognized tribe with about 2500 members, about 1000 of whom live close to the tribal center at Bear Mountain in Amherst County, or in neighboring areas including Madison Heights and Lynchburg. Their language, to which Tutelo is the closest documented remnant, ceased being spoken fluently by the beginning of the twentieth century, and by the middle of that century only isolated words remained. There was only one of hundreds of distinct languages indigenous to North America to meet such a fate.

A number of arguments have been articulated as to why indigenous language disappearance might matter in a global context: linguistic theory depends on linguistic diversity; the loss of languages includes the loss of whole systems of understanding, cultural practices, and local ecological knowledge; language retention is an issue of human rights (Hinton 2001:5). In addition, language retention or revitalization is also an affirmation of indigenous sovereignty, and endangered languages provide unique cultural resources that permit communities to define for themselves how they wish to adapt to transformed social structures and recontextualize traditional practices (Field and Kroskrity 2009). Extending this point further, indigenous languages are integral parts of community members' group identities and concepts of nationhood or peoplehood, ideas that will be explored more explicitly in this study.

These arguments, while powerful, are grounded in Western paradigms and ideologies. In contrast, Nevins (2013) begins her discussion of a language revitalization project at Fort Apache with two quotations, one revolving around the recognition of languages as embodying unique world-view approaches (one of the arguments noted above), and the other this statement by Anishinaabe author Gerald Vizenor:

Native identities are traces, the *différance* of an unnameable presence, not mere statutes, inheritance, or documentation, however bright the blood and bone in the museums (1998:35).

Nevins notes that the first argument is implicitly coupled with the idea of “language rights” and reflects language endangerment as a mobilization tactic for funding and policy development projects, while the second casts doubt on terms recognized in mainstream ideology and locates Native voices in “an unnameable presence” or in “traces” that require a shift in perspective and a recognition of the existence of indigenous and, by extension, culturally specific particularities regarding Native tribal identities. Her study at Fort Apache illustrates some of the problems that can occur in such instances; in this case, the language project was implemented through a school-based setting, taking it out of the family domain that had traditionally been its primary locus. Tribal members felt alienated from the language recovery efforts, and the project was initially unsuccessful (Nevins 2013). This and other cases of language projects that failed to meet prescribed goals are presented by Dobrin (2008) and are also discussed briefly in this chapter.

During the past two decades, cases of indigenous language revitalization projects that would begin the process of what Joshua Fishman calls Reversing Language Shift (1991) have emerged. The majority of these projects have been described, often poignantly, in the first-person accounts collected by Hinton (2013). These include family immersion and community-based projects of Māori, Maya, Mohawk, Hawaiian, Anishinaabe, and Irish (Gaelic). In these cases, fluent speakers remain, if only among the elders, and the projects typically reflect concerted community involvement in addition to meeting with widespread approval among group members of all ages. Two cases in which elder speakers worked with single families to revitalize their languages are also presented: Karuk and Yuchi. In cases where the language is no longer spoken, the situation now appears somewhat more promising than in the past, at least to the degree of commitment evidenced by the singular community members willing to devote their lives to language study and to raise their children as first-language speakers. These include the Wampanoag and the Miami.

The idea implicit in the current ELDD (endangered language documentation and development) empowerment model is that the community itself must possess the motivation to carry out a language program of any kind; otherwise, the program is unlikely to achieve measurable success (see Dobrin 2008 for a survey of projects that failed or that were only partially successful). Nor is motivation alone sufficient for success: there must be some degree of agreement among potential participants in terms of language ideology, which Kroskrity (2009:71) defines as “beliefs, or feelings, about languages that are the inevitable outcome of the interaction of indigenous, colonial, post-colonial, and professional academic perspectives,” noting further that language renewal

or revitalization efforts often display and even magnify the differences in points of view within a given community where they may be embedded. Kroskrity goes on to discuss the importance of ideological clarification in relation to his 25-year work with Western Mono communities of Central California and with Tewa speakers in Arizona, “treating language renewal activities as ‘sites’ [Silverstein 1998] for ideological struggles and as stages upon which differences in language beliefs and practices are often dramatically displayed.” It should be noted that “success” and “failure” may be constructed differently by the community and the researcher, and that what would constitute success or achievement should also be defined.

Fishman’s (1991) concept of “prior ideological clarification”; that is, a thorough and honest assessment of the community members’ motivations and the meanings the language in question holds for them before embarking on the project are especially relevant to my project. As Kroskrity (2009) points out, however, several studies that cite ideological clarification as being essential to project outcome are characterized by a relative lack of theorization. He suggests that a conceptual foundation for it can be found in the theory of language ideologies in its more restrictive sense, in which analysis “synthesizes an interest in inter-relatedness of linguistic awareness, linguistic beliefs, feelings, and practices, and relations of political economic power” (72). Most important, he states, is recognizing that language ideologies present perceptions about language and discourse that are tied to the interest of a specific social or cultural group; in other words, language ideologies are situated within realms of socially constructed groups wielding varying degrees of political economic power.

Dobrin goes on in her article to summarize Margolin's (2004) evaluation of three language projects within communities in which the level of commitment was only partial and found that these communities reflected an interest in the language as something that could be owned, generally as a symbol of ethnicity that could help to build the community's sense of its own identity rather than an interest in the language for the purpose of speaking it.

For instance, in a well-known study Dauenhauer and Dauenhauer (1998) concluded, in their decades of work with Tlingit, Haida, Tshimshian-speaking communities in Southeastern Alaska, that because of community members' ambivalence toward their language, a widespread renewal project would be less realistic than the accomplishment of limited linguistic goals by a small number of committed members. They noted that they, as language activists, had assumed prematurely that the community had already achieved consensus in clarifying language ideologies; instead, they found a gap between goals that were verbally expressed (usually favoring language renewal) and feelings and anxieties that remained unarticulated (generally contributing to language abandonment).

The final unsuccessful language project that Dobrin presents is that of Eleanor Nevins' (2004) work with the White Mountain Apache. Nevins found that a language project was ultimately canceled due to a local concern that was culturally particular: the Apache people perceived that by constructing the project to be acquired in a school setting, the project threatened to estrange the language from the very domain that was at the core of their authority to transmit the language—the family setting. The community's elders were no longer seen as the primary sources of authoritative language knowledge,

because children were learning to speak their language in a classroom. However, the setting failed to transmit the cultural values associated the elders' minds with being Apache; thus, the students were learning how to speak but not how to act in accordance with time-honored traditions, and the elders were disappointed. This study compares well with Samuels' (2006) study, also of an Apache community, which reveals that a deeply revered Christian elder was held in esteem as a language expert not because of his traditional knowledge of songs, stories, or ceremonial language use but because he was able to *translate* in the form advocated by SIL (Summer Institute of Linguistics), an international Christian-based program for language documentation. What was completely lost in using him as a language expert, however, was the preservation of vernacular Apache, the way it had been spoken by ceremonial practitioners who had been respected community leaders before the introduction of Christianity.

Interestingly, several recently documented projects situate language ideologies displayed by community members in relation to their tribal histories regarding the introduction of writing and the relation of writing to language renewal. In one study, a Pueblo community displayed strong attitudes toward and against using literacy as a means of language preservation, primarily because of traditional, conservative beliefs about secrecy and the sacredness of language but also because of beliefs about text and perfectibility (Debenport 2015), while an Assiniboine community displayed an ambivalence toward literacy in which the author concluded that writing had been used to control and oppress the people during their earlier confinement on the reservation (Morgan). These beliefs tie in with my study in that Monacan community members who considered themselves Christian church members have typically expressed an aversion to

“traditional” practices they perceive as being “heathen”; therefore, we might wonder how the reclamation or revitalization of an ancestral Native language might be perceived by these members.

In the following chapters I trace the history of Monacan and Tutelo people and their ancestral language through their thousand-year and older relationship with their homeland in central Virginia, the encounters with colonial powers and enemy tribes that dislocated and disempowered their communities, the more recent history of state policies that pressured them to abandon cultural traditions and language, and the development of connections outside the tribal community that led to a resurgence in tribal identity and revitalized efforts toward cultural preservation. Their history of shared trauma and persecution is deeply relevant to contemporary Monacan peoples’ perceptions of themselves and relation to their ancestral language and its potential for revival. I describe the current community and situate the attitudes tribal members hold about language within the context of a larger pan-Indian movement toward cultural reclamation. I present the results of the study I conducted and analyze tribal members’ language preferences, and I offer some conclusive remarks about how these results fit into the literature on indigenous language ideologies, ideological clarification, and language endangerment and abandonment more globally.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HISTORY OF THE MONACAN AND TUTELOⁱ

For more than a thousand years, the piedmont region of what is now the southeastern United States was inhabited by more than 40 Siouan-speaking tribes whose collective territory likely exceeded 20,000 square miles (Hantman 1994; Mooney 1894:9) (Figure 1). Early contact with European explorers and settlers was infrequent, and the eastern Siouan tribes are thus poorly documented in colonial records (Cook 2000).



Figure 1. Siouan Settlement Patterns. Names of Siouan groups or towns are underlined. Reprinted from Wood and Shields (2000), *The Monacan Indians: Our Story*. Office of Historical Research, Monacan Indian Nation, Amherst, Virginia. Note the presence of the Toteroto (Tutelo), just to the west of the Monacan.

To understand how the language once spoken by thousands of Monacan people throughout the piedmont region of what is now Virginia came to disappear, we must examine the history of a people who experienced physical dispossession of their homelands, marginalization from the emerging dominant society, and multigenerational trauma, often violent, over more than three centuries. This chapter gives an overview of that story from the Monacan arrival in what is now central Virginia through the end of the nineteenth century, charting the displacements and social fracturing experienced by Monacan people and their allies, as European-American settlers and their ideas replaced indigenous ways of being, knowing and communicating. While some of the more basic facts of Monacan history are known to the tribal population today in general, much of this story remains unknown, because many tribal members are unfamiliar with the scholarly sources cited here, which detail that history from a non-Native perspective.

Most of the information recorded concerning eastern Siouan tribes centers around the Monacan alliance of tribes in present-day Virginia and the Catawba territory in South Carolina, probably because many of the smaller tribes located between the two, such as the Sara and Shakori, were decimated shortly after contact, likely due to epidemics of European diseases. The Monacan and Catawba groups have been linguistically differentiated for nearly a thousand years. Swanton (1943) theorizes that the Virginia and Carolina Siouans represented two separate divisions that interacted infrequently (Figure 2), an idea later validated by linguistic studies that link Tutelo to the Ohio Valley branch of Siouan languages, along with Ofo and Biloxi, neither of which are still spoken (Figure 3). Linguists generally agree, based on theories of sound change, that the Catawba

people probably separated from other proto-Siouan groups as much as 4,000 years ago, while the Tutelo and affiliated speakers separated about 3,000 years ago (Dixon 2002).

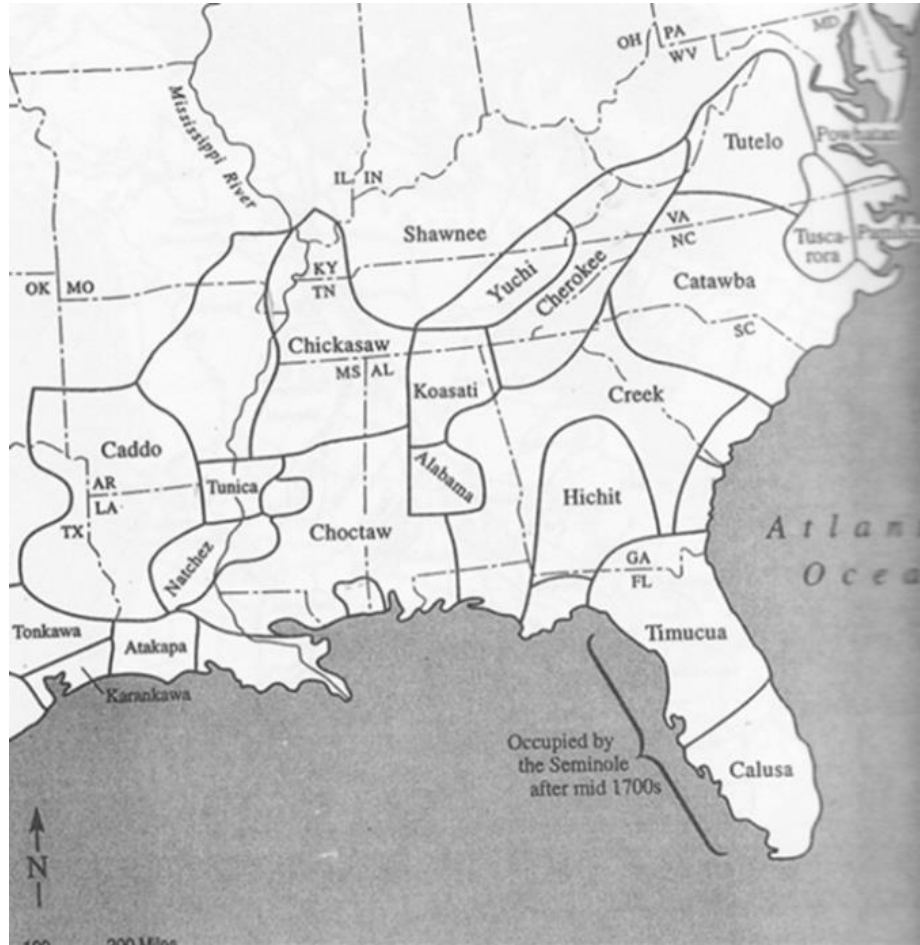


Figure 2. American Indian Tribal Territories in the Southeast. Reprinted from Marianne Mithun (1999), *The Languages of Native North America*. Roberta Bloom, Cartographer. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 608. Note that all Monacan/Tutelo groups are subsumed under the heading "Tutelo."

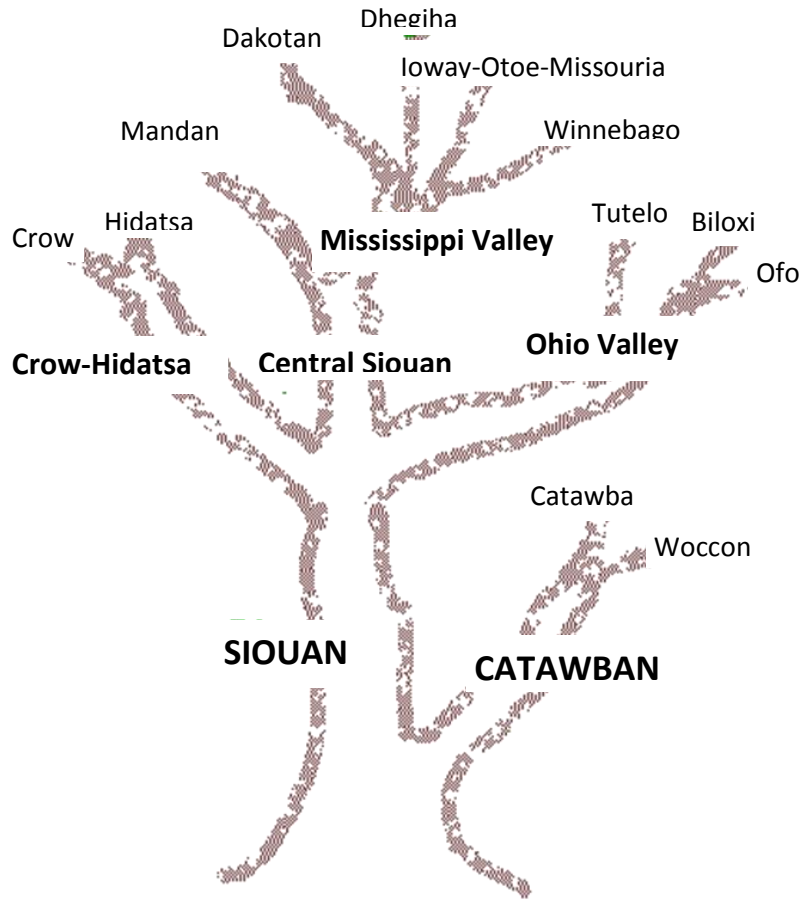


Figure 3. Adapted from “Siouan Language Tree.” John Koontz.

Hale (1883) theorized that the eastern Siouan speakers were united in the Ohio Valley region thousands of years ago and that some of these hunting peoples followed herds of buffalo along the Big Sandy River, a tributary of the Ohio that runs along the Kentucky-West Virginia border, to become the Monacan, Tutelo, and affiliated tribes.ⁱⁱ The Big Sandy has also been called the Tatteroa or Tatteroy, perhaps revealing a connection to the Tutelo, who were also referred to as Toteroy. An editorial footnote to the journal of Thomas Batts, Thomas Wood, and Robert Fallam, who visited the Toteroy on the Roanoke River during their exploratory mission in 1671, notes:

The Toteros...were tall, likely men, having plenty of Buffaloes, Elks and Bears, with other sort of Deer among them. They are represented in this MS as a mountain tribe, but Gallatin...says they were driven thither from the West.

Others have suggested the Kanawha River as an alternate route from West Virginia through the mountains to the east (Griffin 1942), and that the Monacans may have been associated with the Monetons, a little-documented group found along the Kanawha (Swanton, 1936: 379-380). Interestingly, the Big Sandy and the Kanawha, along with its tributary the New River in the lower Valley area of Virginia, flow northwest to join the Ohio, while the James and Rappahannock Rivers, where the Monacan and affiliated communities were later found by European explorers, flow eastward to the Chesapeake Bay. Scholars continue to question whether the Monacan and Tutelo people were ancestrally tied to the early Woodland society known as the Adena (1000-200 BC), who built more than fifty earthwork mounds in what is now West Virginia but whose primary homeland was the Ohio River Valley. Although the Adena constructed burial mounds as did the later Monacan people, mortuary traditions differ, and thus archaeologists are unsure to what extent the Monacan are the cultural inheritors of the Adena.

Archaeological studies note that “Monacan villages appear to have closely followed the major rivers of the piedmont, particularly the James and its tributary the Rivanna, and the Rappahannock and its tributary the Rapidan” (Hantman 1994:96). Most of the few archaeologists working with pre-Contact sites in Virginia now agree that the Monacan territory extended into the Shenandoah Valley as well, and new evidence correlating pottery styles indicates that the boundary may perhaps be imagined much

farther west, into significant portions of West Virginia. Hantman's work, which constitutes the majority of studies available, presents a convincing case for including the Tutelo in the same cultural configuration as the Monacan, along with the Saponi people, found along the Roanoke River drainage. He also suggests that the Monacan were probably "renamed by colonial powers as the Saponi and Tutelo" (1998:4).

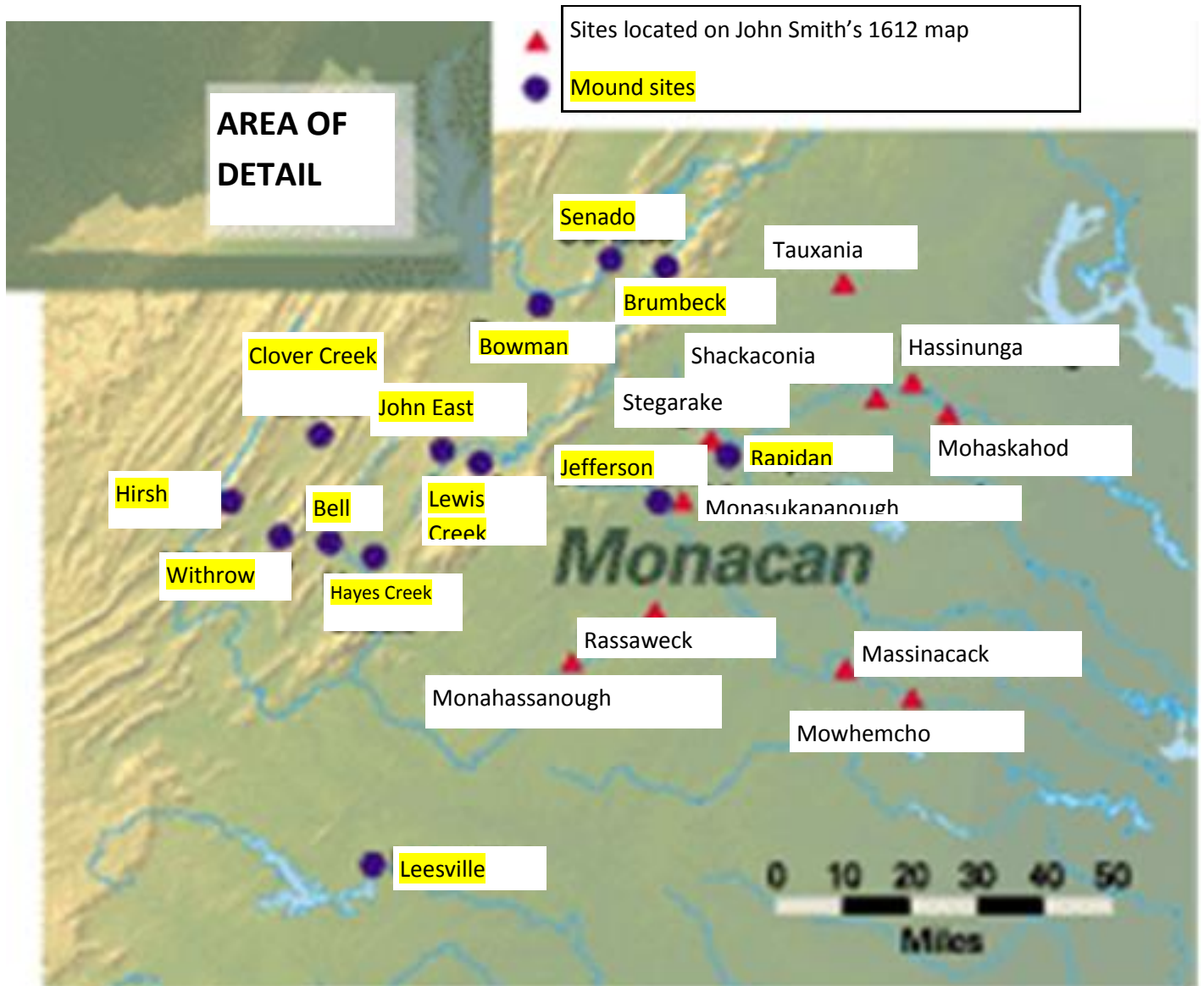


Figure 4. Monacan mounds and town sites. Adapted from Jeffrey Hantman, Karenne Wood & Diane Shields, "Writing Collaborative History." *Archaeology*, 53 (5), 2000.

While many colonial references to the Tutelo place them along the Roanoke, Mooney (1894) also identified them as the earlier occupants of Monahassanugh, located on John Smith's map of 1612. According to Bushnell (1930), "the ancient village of Monahassanugh is believed to have stood on the left bank of the James, about 1½ miles up the stream from Wingina, in Nelson County." This site, later known as the Wood site, was excavated by Hantman (Gallivan 2003). It is considerably farther north, and geographically closer to other Monacan sites, than other sites identified as the Tutelo. The community of Monasukapanough, in present-day Charlottesville, was affiliated with the Saponi in pre-colonial times.

The Monacan/Tutelo alliance covered the area of Virginia west of the coastal plain, from the Fall Line of the rivers, north along the Potomac, and south to at least the Roanoke River. The group is thought to have comprised somewhere between 10,000 and 20,000 people before European contact (Figure 4). The Monacan group included the Mahoc and the Nuntaly; the Tutelo group included the Saponi, Nahyssan, Occaneechi, and probably others. The Mannahoac, to the north, included the Stegarake (identified on Smith's 1612 map as the occupants of a community on the Rapidan River in present-day Orange County) and other tribes (Cook 2000:26). Together these tribes formed a loose confederation of allies that banded together for trade and military purposes.



Figure 5. Detail from John Smith's map, published in 1612, with locations of Monacan towns.

The central town of the Monacan was located at Rassawek, at the confluence of the Rivanna and James Rivers; it was the likeliest location for the largest festivals and the town to which all other Monacan communities paid tribute (Cook, 2000). Rassawek was never documented by European explorers, and the archaeological site there was destroyed when it was bulldozed in the 1980s to create a natural gas pipeline.

Mowhem(en)cho, later known as Manakin Town and called Manakin today, occupied the south bank of the James above the falls, and Massinacack was at the juncture of the James and Mohawk (Mahock) Creek, fourteen miles west of Mowhemcho. Monahassanugh was farther west on the James at present-day Wingina, and Monasukapanough was on the Rivanna in present-day Charlottesville.

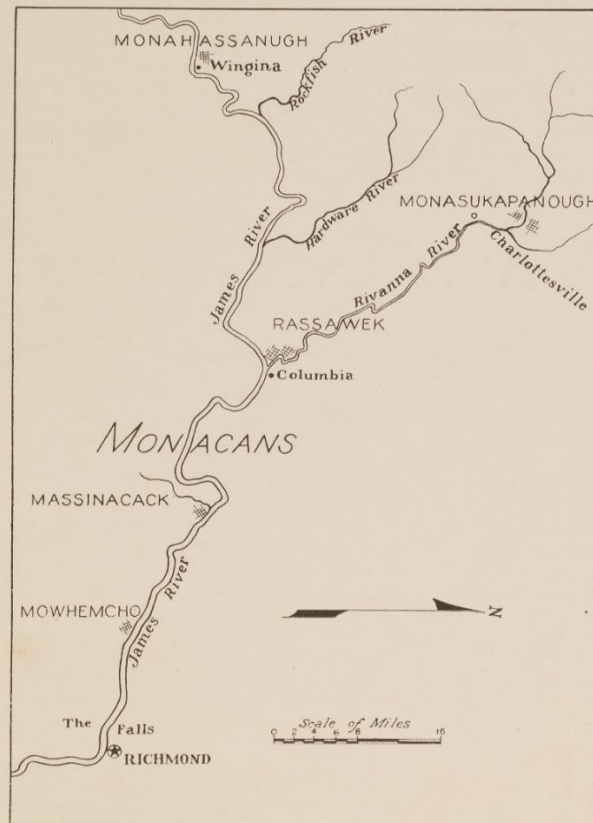


FIG. 2.—Detail of a recent survey, with sites of Indian towns added. For comparison with map of 1624, figure 1.

Figure 6. Five Monacan towns located by John Smith and described by Bushnell (1930).

The cultural complex has been identified archaeologically as being associated with thirteen accretional burial mounds located throughout the piedmont region (Hantman 1994) and extending into the Blue Ridge Mountains and Shenandoah Valley (Hantman 1990, 1994; Mouer 1981, 1983). These mounds date back to A.D. 900, and mortuary activity continued at the easternmost sites until at least A.D. 1440 (+/- 110) and perhaps much later, considering Thomas Jefferson's observation of a party of Indians

who visited the Monasukapanough mound in the 1750s, which he excavated in 1783 (Hantman and Dunham 1993). Under the mounds are smaller cemeteries of individual burials, dating back to A.D. 600 in some cases, and within the center are disarticulated burials of the bones of up to 2,000 individuals, deposited over several hundred years. Burials within the highest levels of some mounds suggest that mortuary practices may have evolved from collective to individual burials, perhaps reflecting a change to a more hierarchical social structure. It also appears that up to six separately identified communities participated in mortuary practices using the same mound. In fact, only one mound exists for the entire James River, and another for the entire Rappahannock. In addition to serving as burial repositories, the mounds may also have served as visual markers delineating territory (Dunham, Gold and Hantman 2003:112).

It is important to note that none of the cultural alliances mentioned could be considered static, because groups were continuously shifting and realigning cultural parameters as well as physical boundaries, and most groups are believed to have been multilingual within their own confederations. Many groups were genealogically related; all incorporated captured women and children from enemy tribes as adopted members. To the southwest of Monacan territory lay the homelands of the Iroquoian-speaking Cherokee, to the north was the formidable Iroquois confederacy itself, and directly to the east were the Algonquian speakers of the Powhatan paramount chiefdom and its allies, with Algonquian speakers ranging over the entire Eastern seaboard from what is now Canada at least as far south as Georgia. According to Chief Powhatan in 1607, the Monacan conducted annual raids against enemy tribes, including his own, traditionally during the autumn, following the harvest (Haile 1998:109). Because of these various

forms of interaction, the ability among many tribal members to speak languages outside the Siouan confederation was common, and European explorers seemed to have had little trouble finding translators during their travels throughout present-day Virginia.

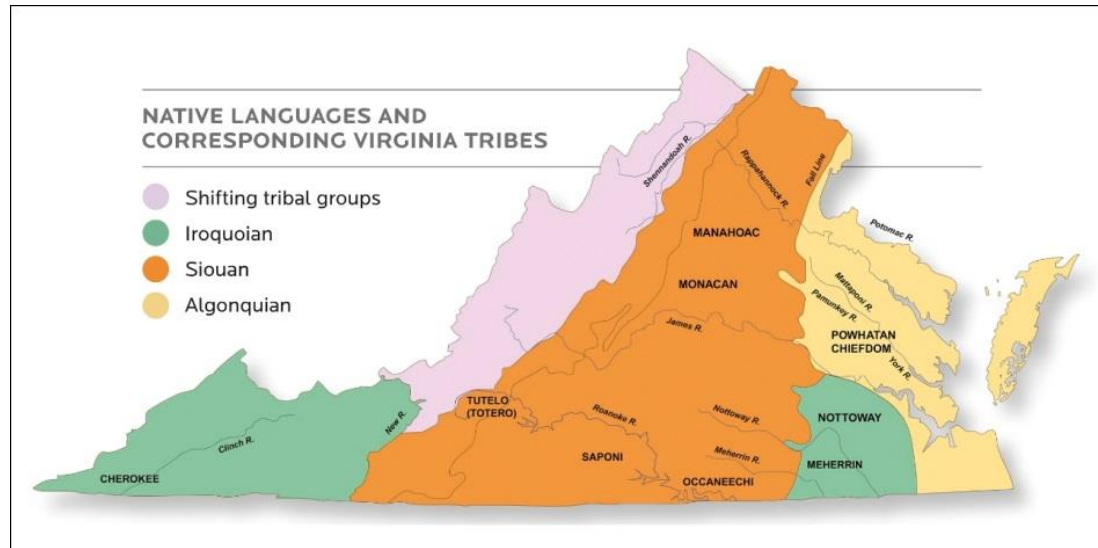


Figure 7. Tribal groups and languages, circa 1607. Reprinted from Karenne Wood (ed.), *The Virginia Indian Heritage Trail*, 2nd ed. Charlottesville: Virginia Foundation for the Humanities.

Bushnell has documented evidence that Monacans were known to mine large quantities of minerals such as schist, sandstone, soapstone, steatite, and quartz. The name “Monacan,” he believed, stems from a Powhatan appellation that meant “earth diggers.” Speck (1935: 213) suggested another interpretation:

In the early form Monacan, denoting, in the 17th century, the Saponi, Tutelo, and probably the Occaneechi assembled, we may have a corruption of Tutelo *amani*, *amai*, “land,” prefixed to the term *yuhkan*, whence tentatively develops *aman(i)(y)uhkan*, or Monacan, “people of the land.”

Amani can also mean “earth”; thus it could be suggested that similar meaning has been inferred by both scholars, though their theories of linguistic origin differ.

The Monacan association with mining and minerals may have placed them in a vital position with regard to the most important metal known to pre-contact Native peoples of the region: copper. Copper is found in the Blue Ridge Mountains in Monacan territory and was prized as a spiritual substance more than for its properties as a metal. Possession of it, in the coastal plain region, was regulated by the paramount chief Powhatan. However, the copper itself came from the mountains and from the Great Lakes region. Hantman (1990, 1994) has suggested that the Monacan regulated the copper trade and that Powhatan’s efforts to incorporate the newly arrived English into his own political system may have had more to do with access to copper than any other reason.

Before the contact period, the Eastern Siouan tribes were agricultural, subsisting on the “three sisters” crops of corn, beans, and squash, as well as partially domesticated plants like chenopodium and sunflowerlike most tribes of the mid-Atlantic region. Archaeological analysis indicates the introduction of domesticated plants by A.D. 900. Over the ensuing 300 years or so, tribes became increasingly sedentary, with more emphasis on storage of surplus foods and development of social hierarchies. Some archaeologists suggest that the diets of Monacan people included as much as fifty percent maize (Dunham, Gold and Hantman 2003). Hunting was also a critical component, providing white-tailed deer and a variety of smaller animals. The degree to which fish were important to the Monacan diet is not known, but the remains of Native fish weirs (traps) exist in the James River, above the falls, to this day.

According to eastern Siouan oral tradition, these tribes came together in the spring and fall each year for two great trading feasts, the celebration of the Green Corn Dance in the summer and the Harvest Dance in the fall (see Kurath 1981). Social mobility occurred at these times; marriages were arranged (and perhaps divorces as well), and some families opted to change community affiliations. Leaders led by acclamation and were occasionally displaced as others rose in popularity (Swanton 1943), and they seem to have derived their leadership through patrilineal ties, unlike the Powhatan to the east. John Lederer, who explored the region in 1670, described one Tutelo (Nahyssan) leader as a rich, warlike tyrant, but he failed to note the criteria for leadership. On the other hand, John Fontaine explored a nearby region in 1715 and noted that the Saponi were led by a council of twelve elderly men and did not appear to have a chief at all. Children were reared by persuasion, not force, and it is likely that clan systems governed domestic relations.

Eastern Siouan towns were composed of numerous semi-permanent dome- or loaf-shaped dwellings constructed from saplings, covered with bark shingles, and lined with waterproof woven cattail mats, with a smoke hole at the top. These structures were arranged in a circular pattern. A few towns had a ceremonial longhouse where the many religious rituals were observed, and many featured a central platform from which an orator could address the people. Towns were occasionally encircled by a palisade of logs for protection. The people would leave their towns at the end of the growing season and move to hunting camps, where they spent the winter in smaller groups, hunting deer and smaller animals and birds (Swanton 1943; Wood and Shields 2000). There were also elk in the area, and the smaller Woodlands buffalo existed in the region as late as 1730

(Alexander 1972: 106), although scholars disagree about its likely importance to Monacan diets.

Long before the Europeans arrived, the Monacan tribes had developed alliances and enmities with neighboring tribes. Their alliance with the Iroquoian-speaking Susquehannock to the north protected them from incursion by the formidable tribes of the Haudenosaunee confederacy, later known to Europeans as the Iroquois, and from the Conestoga, also Iroquoian speakers, who inhabited southern Pennsylvania. These tribes habitually raided the tribes to the south; they collectively called the Monacan and Tutelo people *Todirichrone*, from which the name Tutelo is thought to derive. Over time, the ancient hostilities would erupt in a cycle that ultimately dissolved the military power of the Monacan people.

Colonial History

In this section I examine the history of Monacan, Tutelo, and related peoples during the seventeenth century and trace the various movements of the people as pressures upon them intensified. During this period, their populations dropped so dramatically that the survivors were forced to regroup and consider alliances with former enemy tribes whose languages were vastly different from their own.

The earliest known contact between Europeans and Monacan people occurred in 1608, when John Smith and other colonists from Jamestown made an exploratory voyage up the Rappahannock River to a site somewhere near present-day Fredericksburg.

During their explorations, John Smith and his compatriots encountered a group of Indians who fired arrows at them from shore and then disappeared. Disembarking to investigate, the company discovered a wounded man who identified himself through Smith's guide, a multilingual Powhatan interpreter named Mosco, as Amoroleck. Smith described Amoroleck's pronunciation of his language as sounding like Welsh and noted that the English asked Smith whether he could translate the words. When Smith asked why Amoroleck's people had attacked the English, he replied, "We heard you were people from under the world, who came to take our world from us." This remark stands as the only recorded speech from a Monacan Indian during the seventeenth century (Barbour 1986:II:175-176).

Apparently, the Monacan had developed a sophisticated and far-reaching trade network and road system long before the arrival of Europeans. One of the reasons they were able to obtain prized colonial goods without direct contact with the English was their connection with the powerful Susquehannock, located strategically at the head of the Chesapeake Bay. The Susquehannock were allies of the Occaneechi, one of the Monacan tribes, and they quickly rose to prominence as a trading partner in the region.

Only a few additional encounters between Monacan groups and Europeans occurred during the seventeenth century. Christopher Newport, governor of the Virginia Colony after John Smith, led a second expedition to the Monacan area in 1608, which he termed "the land called the Monscane." His party visited two towns, Monhemencouch (Mowhemcho) and Massinacack. The people treated them "neither good nor bad," Newport reported, but for their security they captured a chief and tied his hands, using him as a guide (Barbour 1986:I:238). Clarence Alvord and Lee Bidgood reported on

their visits to Saponi and Tutelo communities in 1650, and John Lederer visited the town of Manakin on the James just above the fall line, and went on to find the Saponi and Occaneechi along the Roanoke River in 1670. By this point Monacan warriors had obtained muskets, and they greeted Lederer with “volleys of shot.”

It was Lederer who noted, “One language is common to them all, though they differ in Dialects” (1958). In 1705 Beverly noted that the general language used among Indian tribes in Virginia was that of the Occaneechi, a small tribe located at the confluence of the Dan and Staunton Rivers, and that this language was used as Latin is in Europe. Hale concluded that the Tutelo and Saponi spoke slightly different dialects of the same language (1883: 3), and Mooney indicated that the history of the Tutelo and Saponi was the essentially same after 1700 (1894). For this reason the Monacan people of today consider Tutelo a very close linguistically related language suitable for reclamation, as it is the only language from the region that was documented, and it appears to have been mutually intelligible with their ancestral language.

One noted instance of hostility erupted between English and Monacan people in 1654, when a group of several hundred Indians settled at the falls of the James. Although their identity is not documented precisely, some of Lederer’s Siouan informants acknowledged that they were present at the time. Colonial militia allied with Powhatan tribal forces and attacked the newcomers. The English and their allies were defeated by the Monacans and their allies, and the Pamunkey chief Totopotomoy was killed in the battle.

James Needham and young Gabriel Arthur began an expedition west from Fort Henry in April 1673, but they were stopped by Occaneechi Indians before reaching the mountains, and they returned home. They set out again in May, encountering a group of traveling Cherokees. Needham and Arthur accompanied them to their village in the mountains (near Rome, Georgia). Needham took twelve Cherokees back to Fort Henry and left Arthur in the village to learn the Cherokee language. When Needham went back to get Arthur, he was murdered by his Occaneechi guide, Indian John, or Hasecoll, who evidently stated that he “valued the English not at all.” Hasecoll told the Cherokees to also kill Arthur, but he escaped through the intervention of the Cherokee chief, who took Arthur to a number of Native communities on his travels, returning him to Fort Appomattox and passing the Monacans at their James River town (Alvord & Bidgood, 1912).

Following colonization, the populations of Monacan tribes and their allies plummeted. Epidemics of European diseases swept through communities, killing up to three-fourths of the people in some cases. While surveying what became the state line between Virginia and North Carolina in 1728, William Byrd (1866) reported the disappearance of five-sixths of the Siouan-speaking peoples he had encountered some twenty years earlier. Cultural traditions became progressively fractured, and many tribes disappeared entirely, as did some of the traditions associated with those groups.

At the same time, the brutal Beaver Wars erupted in the Great Lakes region as the Iroquois attempted to expand their territory and monopolize trade, realigning tribal territories and destroying several previously powerful confederacies, including the Susquehannock. The Iroquois then turned their attention south, relentlessly raiding both

the Siouans and the Algonquians in Virginia. Monacan communities were further reduced in numbers through these raids.

The English spread westward into the piedmont, routing Monacan people from their towns. The Occaneechi were betrayed by their English allies and nearly exterminated in 1676 during Nathaniel Bacon's rebellion, and the survivors joined the Saponi. The Mannahoac were absorbed by other tribes (Cook 2000). The English destroyed the Monacan town of Mowhemcho (later called Manakin Town) and replaced its Native population with newly arrived French Huguenot refugees. For a time the displaced Monacan survivors lived nearby and were described visiting the town, bringing corn and beautifully made baskets to trade for rum. The beleaguered Monacans signed the colonial treaty of 1677, evidenced by the signature of the "Manakin king," whose name is recorded as Shurenough. The Virginia tribes promised loyalty and a yearly tribute to the English in exchange for designated lands and military protection.

A remnant group of Saponi and related tribes took refuge at Fort Christanna in what is now Brunswick County in 1714. In 1717, a group of Catawba visited the school located at the fort, bringing children to be educated, and a party of Seneca attacked. Built and financed by the colonial government as a frontier fortification to protect the interior during the Tuscarora War in North Carolina, the fort was abandoned within five years due to pressure from Iroquois tribes and lack of support from the Virginia authorities. The Iroquoian-speaking Tuscarora lost their war with the English and left North Carolina; a small group of them joined the Monacan people in the mountains, while others went north to ally with the Iroquois (Cook 2000). They became the sixth nation in the Iroquois League in 1722 and today are federally recognized, with lands in the state of New York.

In the meantime, a list of 46 Saponi words was collected by John Fontaine at the Fort. Those words are nearly identical with words collected by Horatio Hale from his Tutelo informant in Canada, decades later.

The Saponi and Tutelo people relocated frequently over the next twenty years, shifting to the Carolinas, where they attempted to ally with the Catawba, and back to Virginia, where they found their lands overtaken by English settlers. Governor Alexander Spotswood negotiated for their protection from the Iroquois in the Treaty of Albany; specifying the “Saponis, Ocheneches, Stengenocks, Meipontskys & Toterros,” along with surviving Powhatan tribes (Colonial History of New York, Vol V, 655-677). Once the Iroquois declared peaceful intentions toward the southern tribes, they offered them sanctuary in their own lands to the north. Their representative was described during treaty negotiations as saying this:

Though there is among you a nation, the Todirichones, against whom we have had so inveterate an enmity that we thought it could only be extinguished by their total extirpation, yet, since you desire it, we are willing to receive them into this peace, and to forget all the past (Hale 1883: 5).

Tutelo Relocation History

Perhaps following the Tuscarora who had left Virginia earlier, the Tutelo and some of the Saponi moved north in the 1730s, under the protection of their former enemies, the Cayuga, and were admitted into the Iroquois Confederacy in 1753. They lived for a time in Shamokin, Pennsylvania (now called Sunbury), in a community of intertribal refugees brought together under the Oneida headman Shikellamy. They later

settled on Cayuga land near what is now Ithaca, New York. Their principal town, Coreorgonel, was sacked by the English, in revenge for the acts of some Iroquois groups who supported the French during what is erroneously called the French and Indian War. In this section I trace the movements of the Tutelo people from Virginia into Canada, where they affiliated with the Six Nations reservation and where some of their descendants live today, and I discuss efforts of various anthropologists to document their language in that location, because those efforts resulted in the language documentation of Tutelo that is available to us today.

According to Speck (1935), the political status of the Tutelo within the larger League of the Iroquois was described not as an additional tribe as with the Tuscarora but as that of a “prop,” or a “support between the logs.” Small adopted tribes were permitted to maintain a chief to sit in the League Council of forty-nine members. This chief had the authority to speak and act only in matters pertaining to the Tutelo tribe, not in those affecting the Six Nations.

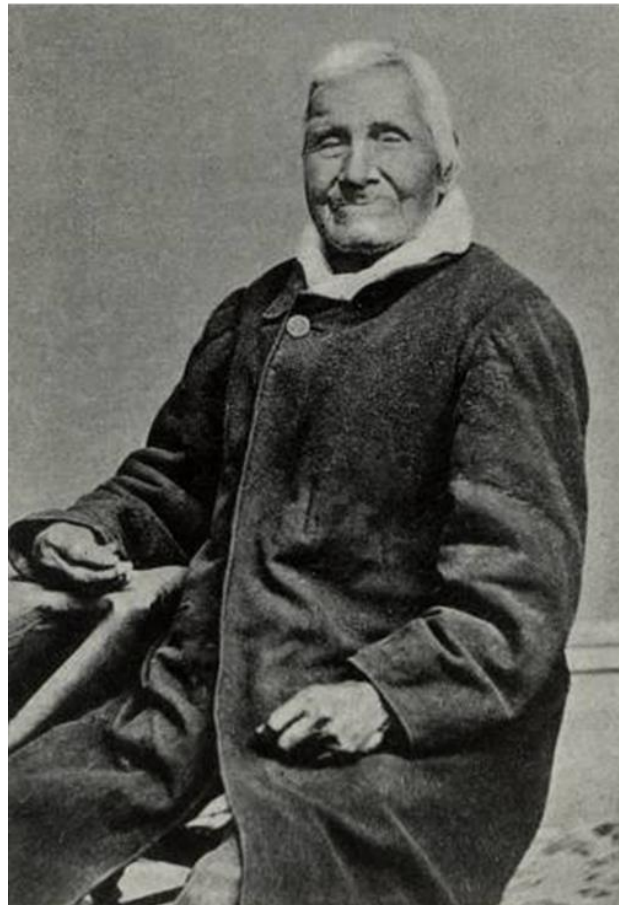
The Tutelo who survived the English attack on Coreorgonel escaped to Canada along with their allies, but they parted ways with the remaining Saponi near Niagara Falls and went on to build a town near what is now Brantford, Ontario. Two epidemics of Asiatic cholera, in 1832 and 1848, decimated the Tutelo nation. By 1870, only one full-blooded Tutelo was thought to remain. Known as Nikonha (Figure 8), he became Horatio Hale’s informant during the year before his death. His information forms the greater part of what is known about the Tutelo language (Hale 1883). At that time, he believed himself to be 106 years old. The son of Onusowa, a chief among the Tutelo,

Nikonha had served in the War of 1812, for which he received a pension, and he had married a Cayuga woman.

Hale offered the following description of Nikonha:

His appearance, as we first saw him, basking in the sunshine on the slope before his cabin, confirmed the reports, which I had heard, both of his great age and of his marked intelligence. ‘A wrinkled, smiling countenance, a high forehead, half-shut eyes, white hair, a scanty, stubby beard, fingers bent with age like a bird’s claws’ is the description recorded in my note-book. Not only in physiognomy, but also in demeanor and character, he differed strikingly from the grave and composed Iroquois among whom he dwelt. The lively, mirthful disposition of his race survived in full force in its latest member. His replies to our inquiries were intermingled with many jocose remarks, and much good-humored laughter.

Figure 8. Nikonha, photographed in his military coat. Photo by Horatio Hale, 1870. Reprinted from Hale (1883), “The Tutelo Tribe and Language.” Philadelphia: *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 11 (114).



Although Nikonha was presumed to be the last full-blooded Tutelo, Hale also reported hearing about several descendants whose mothers were Tutelo but whose fathers were Iroquois. According to the Iroquois custom of matrilineal descent, they were held to be Tutelo. Hale (1883: 9-11) notes:

One of them, who sat in the council as the representative of the tribe, and who, with a certain conservatism worthy of the days of old Sarum, was allowed to retain his seat after his constituency had disappeared, was accustomed to amuse his grave fellow-senators occasionally by asserting the right which each councilor possesses of addressing the council in the language of his people,--his speech, if necessity requires, being translated by an interpreter. In the case of the Tutelo chief the jest, which was duly appreciated, lay in the fact that the interpreters were dumbfounded, and that the eloquence uttered in an unknown tongue had to go without reply.”

Either of two Tutelo descendants who were known to have survived Nikonha could have been the chief in question. John Tutela died in 1888 at the age of 100, and before his death he bequeathed a hickory stick, symbol of chieftainship, to a Canadian Inspector. The other Tutelo, John Key, called Nastabon or “One Step,” apparently lived alone in his old age, without anyone to whom he could speak his own language.

In the 1930s, Frank Speck conducted field research among Tutelo descendants in response to the request of Samuel Johns, who had exchanged several letters with Speck and who claimed to be a Tutelo chief. Speck found seven Tutelo descendant families among the Onondaga, the Seneca, and the Cayuga, and he discovered several rituals of

Tutelo origin that were no longer conducted in Tutelo speech but which continued to revolve around Tutelo songs. Speck remarked on the unusual significance of the Redressing, or Adoption Rite, which he documented, because its songs, specific rituals, equipment, symbols and function reflected its Tutelo origin and character and therefore indicated the survival of Tutelo culture even though the Tutelo “blood” had been absorbed into the larger Iroquois nation. Speck noted the Tutelo chief at that time as John Buck, a descendant of a long line of Tutelo leaders, going back to Ka’sto-hagu, “Dwells in Stone,” who was said to have been the last Tutelo chief in Virginia.

In 1925 Joe Henry, the oldest living Cayuga at that time, related a story to Frank Speck, stating that Ka’sto-hagu was the first Tutelo to come to the Six Nations, and that he had previously lived in a cave, formed in such a way that only one intruder could enter at a time, and that he had been able to kill a great number of Iroquois enemies by remaining there. The same tradition was also recorded by Byrd in 1733, referring to a cave on an island in the Roanoke River above Occaneechi Island and inhabited by the Tutelo before 1701. In this story, the Tutelo chief and two men were able to defend the cave against a large party of Iroquois enemies (Byrd, quoted in Speck, 1935).

Speck recorded the following story, narrated by Deskaheh, a Cayuga chief.

“How the Tutelo Were Adopted by the Cayuga”

The Tutelo came up from the south. They did not have any settlements and lived in the woods and caves like wild people. They were a very timid people and were afraid of other Indians. The Tutelo scouts who went out to look for the smoke from camp fires (settlements) would transform themselves into mice and travel

under the leaves so that they would not be discovered by unfriendly Indians. When they wished to look over the country they would resume their natural form and climb to the tops of trees. The Tutelo scouts were at last seen by the Cayuga who, being a friendly and peaceful tribe, invited them to join their settlement. They accepted and mingled with the Cayuga and learned their language. The Tutelo scouts returned to their people and told them how they had been taken in by the Cayuga. They brought back the other Tutelo and their families to the Cayuga settlement. There they built a camp of logs. When sleeping at night they were arranged like spokes of a wheel, feet to the fire: the children first, then the women, and last, the men to guard the camp. One night the Tutelo overheard the Cayuga talking in council with the Seneca. They could not understand all that was being said, but it sounded to the Tutelo like a plan to eat them. They thought that the Cayuga and Seneca were saying, "The Tutelo are good to eat." It proved to be that the members of the council were talking over the proposed plan for the adoption of the Tutelo" (Speck, 1935: 208).

It would thus appear that the Tutelo had lost the military might they once had and that they were forced to creep around like mice while they traveled from one threatening location to another. No doubt the narrator of this story found great humor in the notion that his people might eat the frightened Tutelo survivors.

In addition to Hale and Speck, other anthropologists such as Leo Frachtenberg and Edward Sapir documented the Tutelo language and some of the cultural traditions of the people who spoke it in Ontario. Working with Tutelo ritual specialists, Hale recorded some songs on wax cylinders, and these were later archived at the American

Philosophical Society in Philadelphia. Additional information on rituals has been documented by Speck (1942) and by Kurath (1981). Most recently, a complete grammar and dictionary was compiled by Oliverio (1986). Unfortunately, although a number of songs were recorded, few translations are available, and no real Tutelo texts exist.

The Tutelo language has apparently not been spoken fluently in Canada since the 1940s (Kurath 1981:5). In 1981, one elderly man was able to remember some Tutelo words but had not spoken the language since childhood (Mithun 1981). With the exception of the Saponi word list collected at Fort Christanna, none of the other related dialects have been documented in any form, and none of the other southeastern Siouan languages that existed through the nineteenth century are currently considered living languages. Through the efforts of several tribal members, documentation of Tutelo was discovered on wax cylinders at the American Philosophical Society, and eventually Lawrence Dunmore of the current Occaneechi tribe in North Carolina began to study the language and to publish language lessons in the tribal newsletter. Today the Monacan people identify with Tutelo as the closest recoverable form of their ancestral language.

The Bear Mountain Monacan Community at Tobacco Row

While numerous tribal groups from the central Virginia area dispersed during the eighteenth century, a number of the Monacan people remained in their homeland. Here I consider the history of various groups of Monacans and other tribes that coalesced at Bear Mountain and became the ancestors of the modern Monacan community, the focus of the present study. The first white trader, a Scotsman named Hughes, arrived in the

foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the 1720s. He married an Indian woman. Additional trading posts sprang up in the 1730s, and some of the traders married local Indian women as well (Brown 1939).

As late as 1742, Saponi Indians were brought to court in the Orange County area for stealing hogs from settlers (Merrell 1989). Other Monacans were located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, an area now known as Amherst County, where they were documented by John Taliaferro as early as 1682 (Figure 7). They appear as Monacan and Tuscarora on Lewis Evans' map of 1755. In the 1750s, two villages existed on opposite sides of the James River in what is now the Lynchburg-Madison Heights area, and in 1805 one village was documented there. Also in the 1750s, Thomas Jefferson described a party of Indians passing near his property (in present-day Charlottesville), who visited the Monasukapanough burial mound to grieve. Interestingly, the town of Monasukapanough was associated with the Saponi people; however, by the 1750s most Saponi survivors had left Virginia to ally with the Iroquois, so it is unclear as to which band might have been responsible for the visit. Jefferson later excavated the mound and found numerous disarticulated burials inside (Jefferson 1982).

Beginning in 1758, land patents in the area later called Amherst County were issued to Robert Johns, William Benjamin, Thomas Evans, and Rawley Pinn, ancestors of the present-day Monacan community who married Indian women. These patents locate Monacan families on Porridge Creek, Elk Island Creek, Buffaloe River, and Johns Creek.

A settlement at Bethel was established in the 1750s, near Potatoe Hill. Located near Salt Creek, it thrived for some time but is now in ruins. It originated from a trading

post and became a small commercial center where Indians and whites did business. A gristmill and a tobacco warehouse were built, and a ferry carried local goods down the James River to larger markets. Racial relations appeared tolerable between the two groups, and intermarriage continued despite Virginia’s miscegenation laws, first established in 1691 and 1705. Peter Houck, a local historian, said, “It is common knowledge among older people of the area that the graveyard [at Bethel] contains a mixture of Whites and Indians who have lived in the vicinity for the past two centuries” (1984).

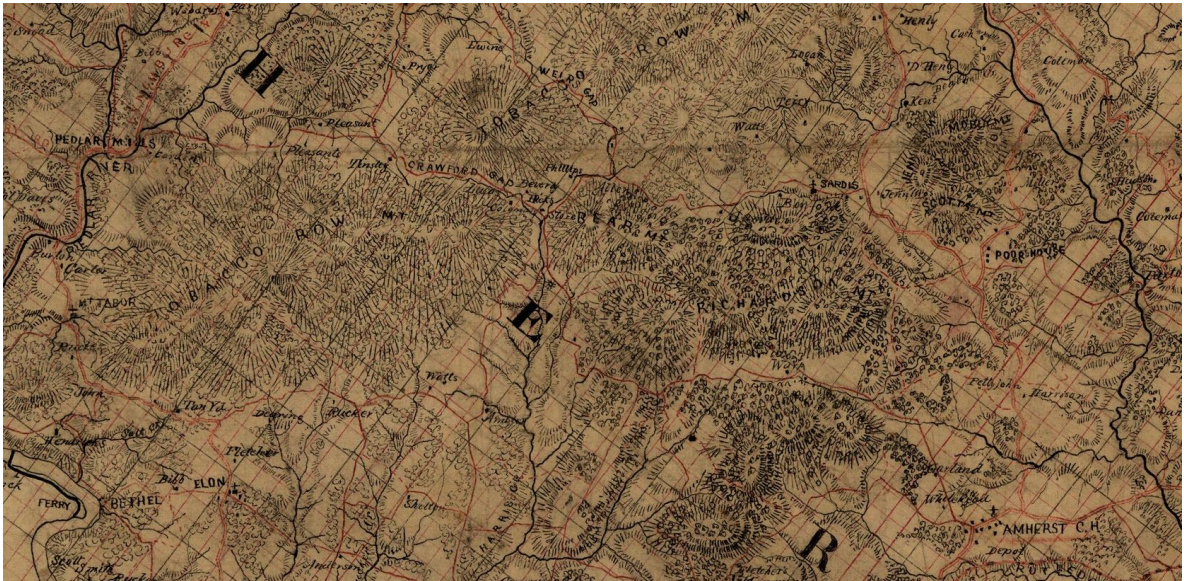


Figure 9. An 1864 Map of Amherst, including Bethel (lower left), Bear Mountain (center) and Pedlar Mills (upper left). See http://www.shasteen.com/genealogy/Map_AmherstVA_CW.htm

This mixed-race community would soon find itself the target of racially motivated bias. Virginia’s 1705 law stated that the child of an Indian should be deemed a “mulatto,” a provision that was upheld again in 1787. Census records therefore classified Indians as mulatto, a designation that came to be replaced with “negro” as time went on. People

labeled as “free colored” were required to register in their counties of residence, and Amherst County registered a number of Monacan surnames on its “free colored” registry in the 1800s, including Johns, Branham, Adcox, Redcross, and Hicks. At that time, free people of color were required to pay taxes but were not eligible to vote (Cook 2000: 60).

In 1807 a settlement on Johns Creek, where a number of Johns family members lived, was listed as “Oronoco,” a post town, on a map of the area. Oronoco was the name for Virginia’s, dark-leaf tobacco developed originally by colonist John Rolfe. Another local historian, Yancey (1935), credited Monacan Indians with helping their white neighbors to grow tobacco, thus contributing to the successful development of Lynchburg, which became one of the largest tobacco markets in the world. The Kanawha Canal segment between Lynchburg and Richmond was completed in 1840. Just prior to the Civil War, Amherst County was one of the top tobacco producers in the state, marketing 2,847,209 pounds in one year (Cook 2000:55).

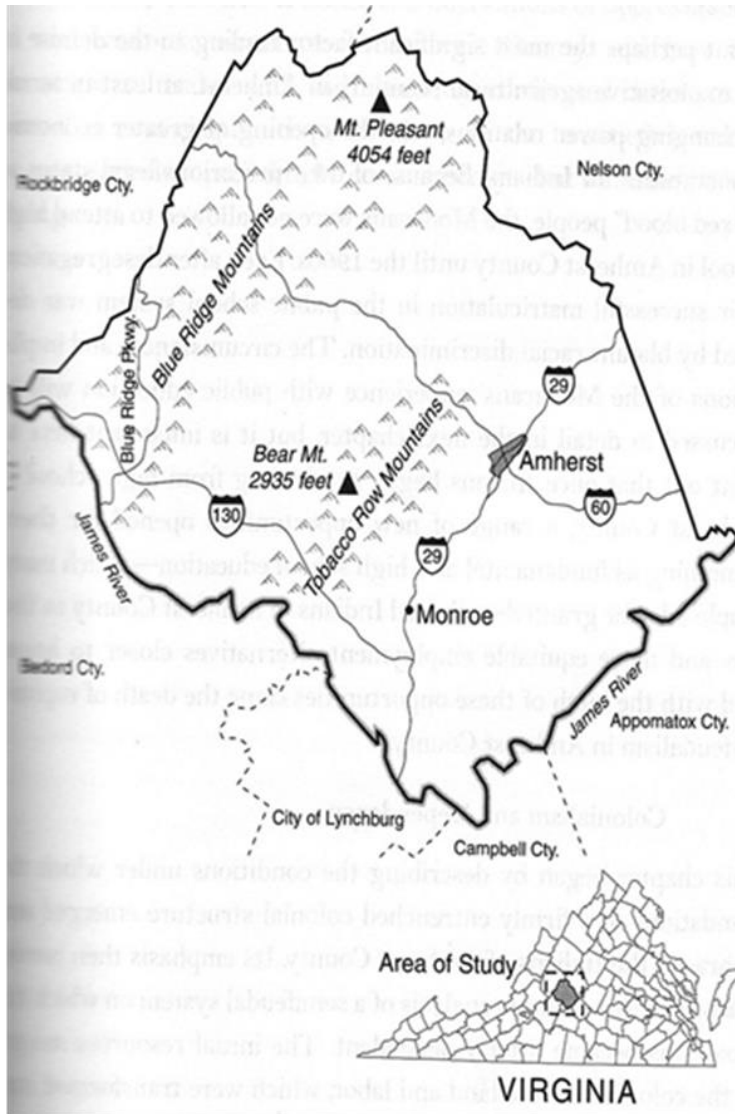


Figure 10. Amherst County, Virginia. Reprinted from Cook (2000), *Monacans and Miners: Native American and Coal Mining Communities in Appalachia*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Amherst County was formed in 1761 from the southern part of Albemarle County, which had in turn been formed from Goochland, itself drawn from the colonial Henrico Shire. In 1806, Nelson County was carved from the northern section of Amherst, creating the present boundaries.ⁱⁱⁱ By 1790, Amherst’s population was nearly 14,000, of whom 5,300 were enslaved. The number of “free colored” people remains unknown.

A settlement of Monacan people was established on 400 acres at Bear Mountain by William Johns, one of the forebears of the contemporary Indian community, in the 1830s. Bear Mountain lies in the Tobacco Row section of foothills, east of the higher Blue Ridge row of mountains behind it. By the end of the century, the Monacan group included 258 individuals who were engaged in farming their own tobacco or sharecropping on neighboring lands. Their white neighbors were unsure what to call this group, and they were labeled Cherokees (*Richmond Times*, 1896).

It is not clear whether the people ever called themselves Monacan; the appellation most often given by Saponi and Tutelo informants is “Yeh-saŋ”, meaning “the people,” while Catawba speakers render it as “Ye is-wa,” or “E-sau,” (Speck 1935). Following the Civil War, as organized racism developed and Jim Crow laws requiring segregation were implemented in Virginia, the surrounding community came to label the Monacan people “Issues.” The word is supposedly derived from the term “Free Issue,” denoting people of color who had been issued freedom papers. It seems plausible, however, that the term originated with the people’s name for themselves. The end of slavery caused local elites to pay more attention to issues of race, and census enumerators were required to change the term for people of color from “mulatto” to “negro.” Monacan people were marked as a group that had broken social norms and taboos through intermarriage. In Amherst, the term “Issue” developed a highly pejorative local meaning, based on whites’ attitudes toward people of mixed race, whom they deemed intellectually and morally inferior. “They [the Monacans] dislike the name very much,” noted Arthur Gray in 1908.

In 1868, several concerned citizens worked together to provide land and a small log cabin meeting-house so that the 350 Indian people at Bear Mountain could attend

church services, which were provided intermittently by Methodist and Baptist ministers. Occasionally they dammed the adjacent creek for baptisms. In the 1890s, Amherst County began providing funds for a part-time teacher, who was invariably white, and a school was established at the log cabin meeting-house. The descendants of William Johns were unable to pay taxes owed on the land he had purchased, and the county sold the last remaining parcel of that land in 1887.

From then on, most Monacan people lived as tenant farmers on their white neighbors' properties. In the late nineteenth century, mixed farming replaced tobacco as the land wore out, and orchards were successfully developed along Tobacco Row, including a large orchard at High Peak, adjacent to Bear Mountain. Monacan people lived there and at several other "fruit farms," as they were then called. They were employed as apple pickers, and at times they also cut pulpwood for the lumber mills. They received little cash for their work but kept their own garden plots and livestock, for which they paid grazing fees to the landlord along with half the crop they produced. They also hunted out of necessity. Meager provisions such as coffee, sugar and salt were obtained through a "contract" with the local store owner, paid by the landlord and deducted from the worker's pay (Cook 2000). In this way the former sovereigns of the region became sharecroppers, living in poverty, barely eking out an existence.

In 1896, Rev. Edgar Whitehead published an article in *the Richmond Times* in which he described Will Johns as "a venerable relic of the past" and noted that there were a number of Indian people living in the Amherst community who were not receiving regular religious instruction. Whitehead incorrectly labeled the group as "Cherokee" and named several others: Mallory Johns, William Evans, and John Redcross. This appears to be the

first time that individual Monacans were documented as Indian. They were the ancestors of the modern Monacan Indian community at Bear Mountain.

CHAPTER THREE

TWENTIETH-CENTURY HISTORY AND IDENTITY

This chapter examines the history of the Monacan people at Bear Mountain through the twentieth century and into the twenty-first. At the beginning of that century, Monacan people were still speaking their language. By the end of it, no one even knew what the language had been called or from which Indian tribe the people had come. The community at Bear Mountain became a target for state-sanctioned efforts to reclassify Indian people as “colored” and to prohibit them and other people of color from marrying into the white race. As persecution from outsiders intensified, the church at St. Paul’s mission became the only safe place to assert a Native identity, and yet, as Christian converts, Monacan people were intensely pressured to abandon their Indian ways and to assimilate into American society. One of the objects of this pressure was their language.

St. Paul’s Episcopal Mission at Falling Creek

With encouragement from the Reverend Edgar Whitehead at Pedlar Mills, a young seminarian named Arthur Gray came to the Bear Mountain community in 1908 to establish a mission. Here I consider the development of the mission that was to form a spiritual center for Monacan people and the only place where they felt safe to acknowledge their Indian heritage through the twentieth century. Gray was able to purchase a small piece of land containing the log cabin and part of Falling Rock Creek,

and to begin construction of St. Paul's Church. The quarter-acre tract was recorded in Amherst County as being conveyed to J.J. Ambler, Elisha Willis, William Adcox and Richard Lawless, Trustees, the latter three being of the Indian community.

Rev. Gray was particularly pleased by the support and interest the Monacans showed toward the mission, donating more than \$350 from their own meager pay. He noted, "These Indian people are increasing rapidly, and one could almost say that they are making a separate nation," although he also stated paternalistically that "the moral conditions under which they have multiplied have been of a very low standard," indicating perhaps that few couples were legally married in a community where almost everyone was illiterate and there was no regular minister.

"They are fond of painting themselves," Gray stated. He also described the community thus:

...they call themselves "Indian Men" and "Indian Women"...As to family names, there are four that comprise most of the population: Johns, Branham, Adcox and Willis...The white people have usually judged the whole tribe from the lowest element among them, as these are the most conspicuous, and so fair treatment has not always been afforded them...These Indians are mostly tenants, though a few of them own land. They raise tobacco in the bottoms and on new ground, and a little corn and oats on the hillsides. The hills are frequently too steep for any kind of wagon, so they put their produce on sleds and slide it down into the hollows.... The women work with the men in the field and can usually carry a hoe as long or longer than the men...Some of them are of the genuine Indian type, but the

typical...is a very rich brunette, with straight black hair and black eyes, and Caucasian features. There are some fine looking men, and pretty young women among them, and few of them are ugly (Gray 1908).

In an article written around the same time for the Smithsonian, David Bushnell (1914) wrote:

At the present time there are living along the foot of the Blue Ridge, in Amherst, a number of families who possess Indian features and other characteristics of the aborigines. Their language contains many Indian words, but as yet no study has been made of this language. While these people may represent the last remnants of various tribes, still it is highly probable that among them are living the last of the Monacan.

Cook (2000), who has published the only scholarly history of the Monacan community so far, noted that the missionaries who came to Bear Mountain were the first to acknowledge the people as Indians rather than as a people of unspecified mixed race. The Reverend Arthur Gray worked to establish a school at Bear Mountain that would provide more intensive education than that offered by the part-time teacher provided by Amherst County since 1889. He succeeded in arranging for several teachers with the help of the Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Virginia. By the time Gray left the mission in 1910, he reported about 350 people in the mission community, about 150 of whom were under age 16. The following photos depict the community setting four years later, when Jackson Davis collected images of non-white schools of that era.



Figure 11. Amherst Mission at Falling Rock, Church and Log Cabin Schoolhouse, 1914.



Figure 12. Mission School House, Student Body and Teacher, 1914.



Figure 13. Recess Time at Mission School, 1914.



Figure 14. Interior, Mission School, with Unidentified Students, 1914.



Figure 15. Indian Settlement Home, 1914. Jackson Davis, Special Collections, University of Virginia. All images used with permission.

In 1912, Miss Lucy Bloxton arrived as a mission worker to succeed a woman whose health had failed. Bloxton lived and worked alone at the mission for quite some time, and in 1916 she married a man from the Monacan community by the name of Pitt Adcox. The white families in Amherst drove the couple from the area (Wagner 1946) because Adcox was not white. Some Monacan people remember being told that the Adcox man was threatened with lynching if he remained in Amherst, and that he was forced thereafter to visit his family members in Amherst after dark in order to keep from being discovered.

In 1918, an article in the *Baltimore Sun* reported that Arthur Beverly was captured and jailed for resisting the draft, and that he was one of eight who were being hunted in the Amherst County mountains. They were said to be heavily armed and would resist arrest; they “belong to a small tribe of Indians who have lived about 10 miles from

Lynchburg since the advent of the white man.” It is unclear whether race figured into the Monacans’ resistance to being drafted at this time; however, it is worth noting that in World War I, Virginia Indians were typically drafted into “colored” regiments.

By the 1920s, the population of the community had risen to nearly 500, according to mission workers, although only 304 Indians were listed on the Amherst County census. The mission workers lived on site, in a house built for them by Sweet Briar College, which was affiliated with the Episcopal Church. The county reluctantly provided a white teacher for the first-to-seventh-grade school. There was no provision for schooling beyond the seventh grade, and most children withdrew before they finished, because they were needed in the fields and orchards (Wood and Shields 2000).

The mission provided a community center for the Monacan people, a place where they could be themselves without fear of racial persecution. It permitted the people to maintain their sense of themselves as separate from the surrounding community, because of their shared history and familial ties. One woman who had attended the school and was a member of the church stated:

I don’t know if any of our people ever stopped and thought about it—where would we be if it hadn’t been for the Episcopal diocese? Where would we be? They came here in 1908 and they took that church over, and they been here ever since. And where would we be if they hadn’t? Would we be a people like we are, so drawn together, and a loving people, and a fellowship people, and be able to give and do and be where we are today?

A Monacan man noted his own similar thoughts:

“If that church hadn’t been there, and with the real close community ties, and if that hadn’t been sustained, I don’t think we would have the Monacan tribe in the position it’s in today. And especially the people that were born and raised here, they are probably more aware of that” (quoted in Cook, 2000: 91).

Typical of white attitudes toward people of mixed race at the time was a demeaning article published in *The Southwestern Episcopalian* by Martin J. Bram. Bram zeroed in on Monacan communicative practices with white people, noting derisively that they tended not to engage outsiders in conversation, and that when addressed, they only mimicked what the person had just said. A typical exchange, he noted, would begin with a white person saying, “Nice day isn’t it?” to which the mixed-race person would reply, “Yes, it is a nice day.” He concluded that the people of the mission community were mentally defective, incapable of carrying on a meaningful conversation, because of their mixed race (Bram 1921).

There are other reasons, however, why a Monacan person might have chosen to respond as Bram reported. Being considered mongrelized in a two-race system, white and colored, Monacans were keenly aware of their social status and the need to “know your place,” as elderly Monacans have noted. To speak out of turn was dangerous; to look a white person in the eye could be considered insolent or challenging. It would seem, therefore, that Monacans were enacting a community-wide rule that protected speakers from possible threats. By withholding any new information and merely repeating what was already said, Monacans were taking no chance at inviting conflict. Bram also failed to observe Monacan speakers interacting with members of their own community to determine ways of speaking within the group and whether those were different.

Another reason Monacans may have been hesitant to speak at length with outsiders concerns their language. If in fact, as Bushnell noted, their language included numerous “Indian” words at this time, they would not have wanted to call attention to that fact by speaking to outsiders. As Arthur Gray noted (1908), they asserted their identity as Indian people when among their own community members, but they did not proclaim it to outsiders unless they were threatened with being labeled “colored” or “negro.” Only in such cases did they assert that their heritage was American Indian.

Walter Plecker and the Eugenics Movement in Virginia

During the same period, beginning in 1912, Dr. Walter Ashby Plecker assumed control of Virginia’s Bureau of Vital Statistics in Richmond. In this section I examine the effects of his racially motivated policies on the community at Bear Mountain and show how his persecution of Monacan people resulted in the fracturing of their remaining cultural practices, including the speaking of their language.

Plecker was a physician whose career had centered on improving medical care and health for newborns. He was also a passionate eugenicist who believed there should be only two racial classifications of people: white people and everyone else, then labeled “colored.” Eugenics had emerged at the end of the nineteenth century from Herbert Spencer’s application of Darwinian theories to create “social Darwinism,” which then developed into the so-called “science of race improvement,” termed “eugenics” by Francis Galton.

Along with several influential friends including the musician John Powell, Plecker worked successfully for Virginia's passage of the Racial Integrity Act of 1924, which prohibited marriage between whites and persons of color. It also required that each person born in the state must have a form listing racial designation. Interestingly, the text of the Act described races then recognized in Virginia as "Caucasian, negro, Mongolian, American Indian, Asiatic Indian, Malay, or any mixture thereof." The Act described "white" as having no other admixture of race but provided an exception of less than one-sixteenth Indian, because numerous Virginia elites claimed descent from Pocahontas. Virginia also passed its Sterilization Act the same year, permitting the state to sterilize women judged to be "feeble-minded" without their consent. Theorists now suggest that the Sterilization Act was meant to control populations of poor whites just as the Racial Integrity Act prohibited entry of those thought to be of mixed race into the "white" category (Smith 1993).

Over the following years, Plecker also compiled a list of surnames of people he suspected to be nonwhite. For Amherst County, that list included Branham, Johns, Adcox, Tyree (Terry), Clark, Suthard, Beverley, Duff, Hicks, Roberts, Lawless, Knuckles, Willis, Cash, Floyd, Wood, and Redcross^{iv}. He had a different list of names for people in Rockbridge County, where another group of Monacan descendants, later called the "Rockbridge County brown people," lived. Plecker sent instructions to clerks of local courts, hospital personnel, school administrators and others, informing them that persons on his list were not to marry or attend schools with white people. Clerks who failed to comply would lose their jobs, and people found guilty of intermarrying could go to prison for two years. In a paper presented to the Southern Medical Society entitled "Shall

America Remain White?” Plecker cited the “triple intermixture” in Amherst County as “the most undesirable racial intermixture known,” and stated that “these mongrels are lazy and rely on the guise of Indian Missions” for survival (Smith 1993).

In 1926, two researchers entered the Monacan community at the invitation of mission workers. Ivan McDougale was an instructor at Sweet Briar College, close to the Monacan community, and Arthur Estabrook worked for the Carnegie Institute of Genetics in Washington, D.C., which was then compiling data on numerous mixed-race communities for its eugenics research (Black 2003). They interviewed a number of Monacan people and then published a disparaging book entitled *Mongrel Virginians: The WIN Tribe*, in which they described a number of community members physically and intellectually, suggesting that racial mixing had created a group of people who were mentally inferior and morally degenerate. WIN was an acronym for White, Indian and Negro. They encoded the names of all participants, but the small community of Monacans easily deciphered who was who, and an internal conflict erupted between those who had talked with the researchers and those who had not. The Monacans also blamed the church Mission workers for bringing the researchers into their community through Sweet Briar, the Episcopal college where McDougale taught. Plecker repeatedly requested the names of people interviewed for the book, but he apparently did not receive them. The book drew the attention of anthropologist Frank Speck, who published a scathing review of it in a reputable journal (Speck 1926). Plecker countered by having Speck’s books banned from Virginia libraries; Speck then abandoned his work with the Virginia tribes and left the state. Had this confrontation not occurred, Speck would likely have visited the Monacan community and documented the language they spoke.

In 1928, Bertha Wailes, a former Sweet Briar undergraduate, completed her Master's thesis at the University of Virginia, entitled "Backward Virginians." She cited poverty and a deficient environment to account for the Monacan people's "backwardness" rather than inferior genes. She also noted isolation from the larger society and rejection by both blacks and whites as contributing factors. She indicated that many Indians worked shares as tenant farmers, that most were treated unfairly and paid poorly by white landlords, and that some families had moved out of state to find better opportunities.

Sweet Briar College developed its own relationship with the Monacan community at Bear Mountain. Built on the site of a former plantation and established for the purpose of educating white women, the college grounds encompass 3,250 acres. Several Monacan men were employed there in past decades, at the dairy, and they received more equitable wages than other employers in the area offered. Sweet Briar provided funds and some labor to build the mission workers' home on site, so that they could move out of the log cabin they had previously occupied. The College also helped to rebuild the church and workers' home when the buildings were destroyed by fire in 1930. From the 1920s to the 1960s, a Sweet Briar sorority group visited the mission on a weekly basis, helping with fundraising, playing games with the children, and developing other activities. They called themselves the "Bum Chums." Older Monacans remembered them with fondness, although no one is sure why they chose such an unflattering name. The club still exists at Sweet Briar, although it no longer interacts with the tribe.



Figure 16. Sweet Briar's "Bum Chums," 1957.

Several years before the 1930 census was to be taken, Plecker began writing to census officials in Washington, stating that people in the Amherst community were not to be considered "Indian." A furious controversy erupted over the census, with Plecker insisting that all people claiming to be Indian should be classified as "colored." A number of letters were sent to census officials from Monacan people. They were defended by the Clerk of the Court, local resident William Sandidge III, who later said, "a more radical man than Dr. Plecker I have never known" (Whitlock 2008).

After receiving numerous letters from Monacan people, state officials, and their white neighbors who opposed their claim of being Indian (including J.J. Ambler, who had earlier helped to arrange the land purchase for the Indian mission), census supervisor Ernest Duff wrote to Reverend Josiah Ellis, pastor at the nearby Pedlar Mills mission, that "these people which I have instructed shall be classified as mixed Indians, and...I find no reason why they should be otherwise reported." He also noted:

the very clannish officials which I found in Amherst are inclined to oppress these people along with the connivence of some others up there. For instance, it was

reported to me that this J.J. Ambler had at one time had an affair with one of this tribe and had been warned to keep away from their community, and ever since has devoted his every effort to persecute these people.

He stated that several ministers could corroborate his position and closed with this remark: "I feel that should this colony of mixed Indians be listed as negroes, a grave injustice would be perpetrated upon a defenceless people" (Whitlock 2008).

In the meantime, eugenicists at both local and state levels were contesting the validity of the "Indian" mission, arguing that the people there were no longer Indian because of racial admixture, and that they descended from Cherokees, whites and negroes. Reverend Ellis wrote an article in 1930 stating that the Amherst "Indian Settlement" could not have originated from delegations of Cherokees en route to Washington, because Will Johns patented land prior to the period of their visits to Washington. He further stated that an Indian named Evans had settled on Buffalo River, and that Evans' daughter married Mallory Johns, who was also called "Portugue" because of his broken English. Ellis listed a number of Monacan marriage records in which participants were deemed to be white and noted that the Indians were permitted to purchase land, unlike the negroes. He stated that the purpose of his article was to show that the "Indian Settlement" inhabitants were descended from Indians.

In 1942 several Monacans hired lawyers to contest the legality of Plecker's actions in changing their birth records. They were able to show that Plecker had written notes on the backs of their birth certificates stating that there were no Indians in Virginia and that the individual should be classified as negro. Monacan people hired lawyers

William Kinckle Allen from Amherst and John Randolph Tucker of Richmond, who wrote Plecker questioning the legality of his actions. Plecker admitted to his friend John Powell that he had done a lot of bluffing and eventually sent copies of the certificates requested by the lawyers, without the pasted notices. Plecker then secured a law legitimating his notices, which remained in effect until 1972 (Smith 1993).

In 1943 another legal challenge occurred because Winston and Roy Branham, Monacan men, were drafted into black regiments, and a subsequent similar case involved seven Monacan men. In all cases the court ruled in favor of the Monacans, who were then permitted to self-identify as “Indian,” and Plecker was forced to admit that he had no scientific basis for his classification scheme (Smith 1993). Nevertheless, he remained in his position for 34 years, continuing to persecute people he considered nonwhite. About half of the Monacan families left Virginia to escape the racial system in Amherst and the Jim Crow segregation laws to which they were subjected, along with blacks. Most relocated outside Baltimore, Maryland, but others moved to West Virginia, Tennessee, and New Jersey. By 1948 only 326 people remained at the Monacan mission.

Plecker made a particular target of the Monacan group in Amherst, perhaps because they had dared to challenge his tactics, and because they insisted on asserting an Indian identity.

. . . Like rats when you are not watching, [they] have been ‘sneaking’ in their birth certificates through their own midwives, giving either Indian or white racial classification,” Plecker wrote (Hardin 2000).

Plecker visited a number of Monacan homes in Amherst County, researching surnames of people he believed to be mixed, and he added these names to his list. Several Monacan elders proudly relate stories passed down through their families, in which Plecker showed up at the door, and their parents or grandparents told him to leave. The following letter is an example of those Plecker send to local clerks, hospital personnel, and school officials to enforce the Racial Integrity Act.

Mr. Plecker has special file

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
Department of Health
Bureau of Vital Statistics
Richmond

January 1943 -

Local Registrars, Physicians, Health
Officers, Nurses, School Superintendents,
and Clerks of the Courts

Dear Co-workers:

Our December 1942 letter to local registrars, also mailed to the clerks, set forth the determined effort to escape from the negro race of groups of "free issues," or descendants of the "free mulattoes" of early days, so listed prior to 1865 in the United States census and various types of State records, as distinguished from slave negroes.

Now that these people are playing up the advantages gained by being permitted to give "Indian" as the race of the child's parents on birth certificates, we see the great mistake made in not stopping earlier the organized propagation of this racial falsehood. They have been using the advantage thus gained as an aid to intermarriage into the white race and to attend white schools, and now for some time they have been refusing to register with war draft boards as negroes, as required by the boards which are faithfully performing their duties. Three of these negroes from Caroline County were sentenced to prison on January 12 in the United States Court at Richmond for refusing to obey the draft law unless permitted to classify themselves as "Indians."

Some of these mongrels, finding that they have been able to sneak in their birth certificates unchallenged as Indians are now making a rush to register as white. Upon investigation we find that a few local registrars have been permitting such certificates to pass through their hands unquestioned and without warning our office of the fraud. Those attempting this fraud should be warned that they are liable to a penalty of one year in the penitentiary (Section 5099a of the Code). Several clerks have likewise been actually granting them licenses to marry whites, or at least to marry amongst themselves as Indian or white. The danger of this error always confronts the clerk who does not inquire carefully as to the residence of the woman when he does not have positive information. The law is explicit that the license be issued by the clerk of the county or city in which the woman resides.

To aid all of you in determining just which are the mixed families, we have made a list of their surnames by counties and cities, as complete as possible at this time. This list should be preserved by all, even by those in counties and cities not included, as these people are moving around over the State and changing race at the new place. A family has just been investigated which was always recorded as negro around Glade Springs, Washington County, but which changed to white and married as such in Roanoke County. This is going on constantly and can be prevented only by care on the part of local registrars, clerks, doctors, health workers, and school authorities.

Please report all known or suspicious cases to the Bureau of Vital Statistics, giving names, ages, parents, and as much other information as possible. All certificates of these people showing "Indian" or "white" are now being rejected and returned to the physician or midwife, but local registrars hereafter must not permit them to pass their hands uncorrected or unchallenged and without a note of warning to us. One hundred and fifty thousand other mulattoes in Virginia are watching eagerly the attempt of their pseudo-Indian brethren, ready to follow in a rush when the first have made a break in the dike.

Very truly yours,

W. A. Flecker
W. A. Flecker, M. D.
State Registrar of Vital Statistics

Figure 17. Letter from Plecker to Local Registrars, 1943. Available at http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/encounter/projects/monacans/Contemporary_Monacans/letter_scan.html

The Monacan Community at Mid-Century

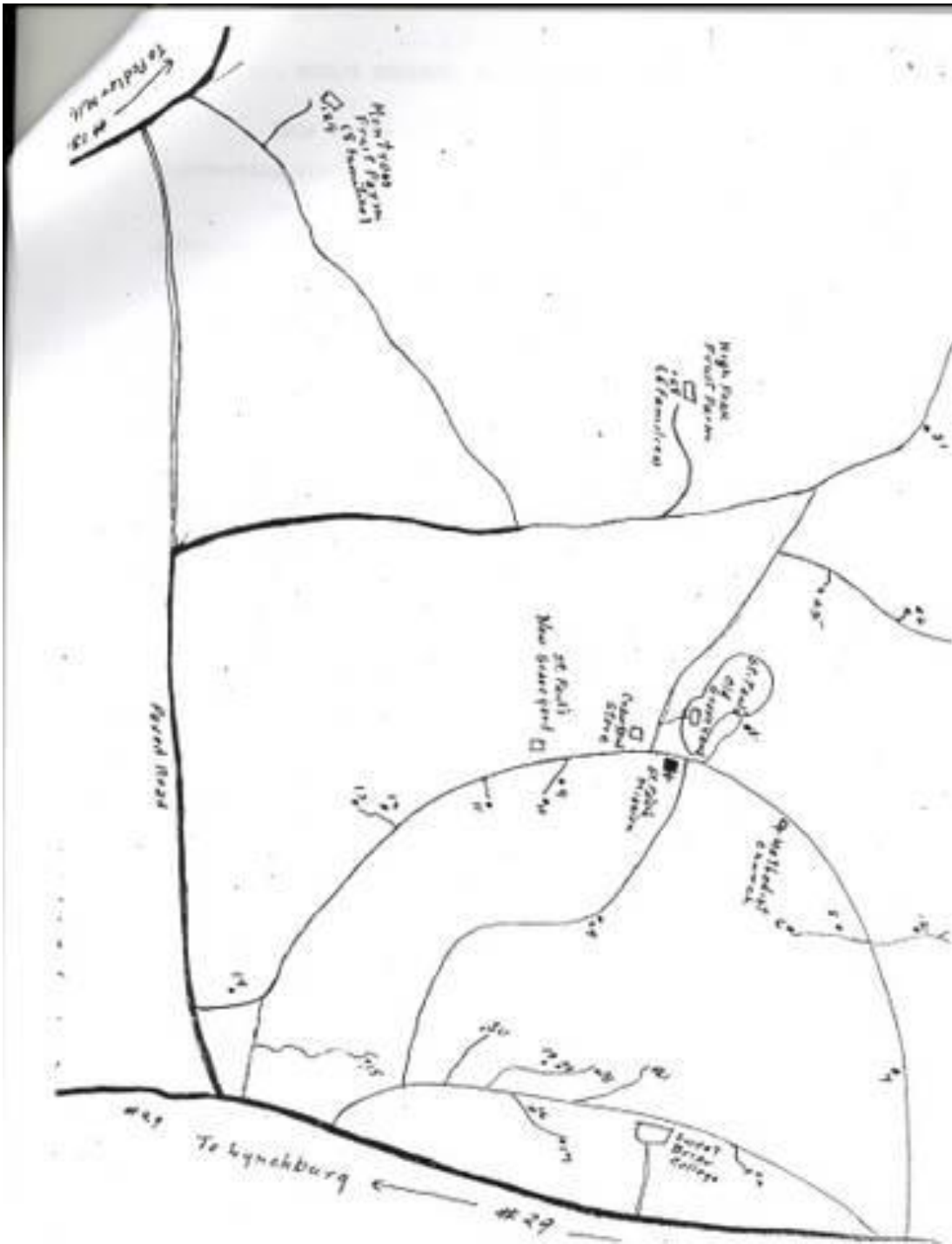
In 1945 the owner of two orchards, Mr. Autovich, who employed thirteen Mission families as fruit pickers, agreed to send a truck to the mission school every day to transport the children. The truck also provided transportation on Sunday for church and Sunday School. Mission workers reported in 1946 that 24 families had left the area, leaving 42 families at the mission. Most of the families had been tenant farmers in earlier years, but by 1945 they had changed to “day work,” cutting pulp wood and providing seasonal labor at the “fruit farms,” or orchards. Here I examine the influences that led many within the Monacan community to relocate out of state and those that remained to band together for support.

With help from the influence of church mission workers, the people were divided into two classes, those with lighter and darker appearances, and the Presbyterian Church formed a separate mission and school at Pedlar Mills, seven miles from the Johns’ Settlement, for “those with more Negroid appearances.” Isobel Wagner, the mission worker, stated that the Racial Integrity Law caused great concern among the people, making it impossible to obtain licenses and other legal papers unless they agreed to the negro designation. She noted, “There are no marriages in the neighborhood” (presumably due to the people’s aversion to the negro designation), and that many families left the state during World War II. She also reported:

The people of the community who are served by the mission call themselves Indians...adhere tenaciously to their Indian ancestry and in facial appearance they do have many Indian characteristics—an unusual coloring, high cheek-bones, etc.

During the harvest season, the orchards had to set up three tables for mealtimes; one for white workers, one for black, and one for the Mission people. Problems of race affected every aspect of life at the mission (Wagner 1946). For instance, Monacans were not permitted to visit white medical facilities, and they refused to seek treatment at “negro” facilities. Two Monacan midwives delivered most of the babies born during the period. Monacans needing hospitalization simply refused to go.

Many of the Monacan families lived close to the Mission at this time, within ten miles. Wagner provided this map showing locations of families and names of specific tribal members. It has never been published before. It shows “St. Paul’s Old Graveyard” on Bear Mountain, which is now owned by the tribe, the locations of the mission, the local country store, the new graveyard for St. Paul’s Church, and the locations of the two orchards where people worked, along with the location of Sweet Briar College, where several others were employed. None of the roads on which Monacan people lived were paved. Some of the Monacans listed on the map key were young at the time; Samuel Cook later interviewed them for his book (2009).



MAP KEY

Distances

- Mission to Amherst - 5 miles
- Mission to Rt. 29 Highway to Lynchburg - 4 miles
- Mission to High Peak Fruit Farm - 3.5 miles.
- Mission to Montross Fruit Farm - 8 miles.

Families listed on Map:

Map number	Name	Adults	Children
1	Peyton Johns	3	5
2	Rob Johns	4	3
3	Vessie Branham	4	4
4	John Adcock	3	3
5	Massey Hicks	3	2
6	Dudley Hamilton	2	4
7	Neal Branham	4	
8	James Branham	3	7
9	Hattie Adcock	1	
10	Ellis Branham	2	
11	Harry Branham	5	7
12	Virginia D. Adcock	1	
13	Boyd Branham	5	6
14	Scott Johns	2	9
15	Houston Branham	2	1
16	Dixie Clark	4	1
17	Wm. Clark	4	2
18	Richard Branham	4	2
19	Frank Hicks	8	4
20	Herbert Hicks	2	2
21	Bowman Knuckles	2	
22	Sammy Branham	2	1
23	Vane Branham	3	
24	Clemmie Knuckles	2	3
25	Nancy Lawless	6	
26	King Lawless	4	
27	Lee Branham	2	2
28	High Peak Fruit Farm- Five Families	10	11
29	Montross Fruit Farm - Eight Families	27	26
30	Bill Redcross	3	
31	Lincoln Johns	2	

Names of families on Fruit Farms –

Montross Farm – Charlie Hicks, Wm. Hamilton, Lewis Johns, Luther Johns, John Johns, Andrew Johns, Effie Johns, Woody Johns

High Peak Farm – Lucian Branham, Walter Branham, Ellie Branham, Hayes Branham, Reed Johns

LOCATION OF FAMILIES AS TO MILEAGE FROM MISSION

Within miles	Families	Adults	Children	Baptized Ind.	Communicants
1.mi.	4	10	14	7	3
1 to 2 mi.	3	8	7	8	1
2 to 3 mi.	7	24	24	13	9
3 to 4 mi.	14	39	15	14	9
4 to 7 mi.	5	20	7	11	7
7 to 8 mi.	9	29	31	9	6

Figure 18. Map of Monacan family locations in relation to the mission, c. 1946 (Wagner)

The End of the Mission Education Era

In 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court decided *Brown v. Board of Education*, which mandated that counties throughout the country desegregate their schools “with all deliberate speed.” Virginia reacted to the decision with its own initiative, “Massive Resistance,” a series of laws that threatened to cut off funding to any school attempting to integrate, or to close it down. In this section I look at the beginning of the modern era for Monacan people, which began in 1963 and which permitted them access to public schooling and more awareness of the world outside of Amherst County as a result, ultimately affecting their own beliefs and attitudes about their identity and culture.

The Massive Resistance initiative was sponsored by Senator Harry Byrd and remained in effect until 1959, when the state Supreme Court overturned it. Amherst had no provisions in place for secondary education for Indians; in fact, it ranked among the lowest in the area for per capita expenditures in all groups in 1950, according to a local newspaper report. By contrast with white and black schools in Amherst, the Bear Mountain school received hardly any funds at all. Overcrowding was a serious problem, which the county resolved by having students attend school on alternate days. Sanitation was another problem, with only outhouse facilities available and water that had to be carried, and bleached, from the adjacent contaminated creek. A few older students enrolled in correspondence courses through an arrangement between the county and the Episcopal diocese, and other students attended a private school in Maryland, where numerous Monacan families had relocated. Most Monacan students simply stopped attending school after the seventh grade (Haines-Bartolf 2007).

Amherst County proposed a \$30,000 bond to build a 76-pupil school for the mission community in 1963, hoping to avoid integration, but the referendum was defeated. Florence Cowan, the mission worker at that time, called the proposal a “pacifier” (Cowan, “Letter to the Editor,” April 4, 1963) and surprised the county with 29 applications for transfer from the mission school to the white high school. The Episcopal diocese decided to close the mission school, backed Cowan and the Monacans, and the School Board sent the applications to the Pupil Placement Board in Richmond.

Later that year, the Bear Mountain school closed for good, and Monacan students entered Amherst County public schools for the first time. But only five students entered high school: county officials selected for attendance those whose skins were lightest. “They lined them up,” an elderly Monacan recalled. Within some families, a few siblings were able to attend the public schools, but others were denied because their skins were “a little bit darker.” This approach to integration caused divisiveness within the Bear Mountain community.

The first group to enter the schools was unprepared for the racism directed at them by other students, as well as by teachers and bus drivers. Several Monacans reported that bus drivers refused to pick them up for school and would simply pass them by. One woman recalled:

We were the first group to go. There were five of us...none of us graduated...[the word “issue”] used to bother my heart deeply...I just couldn’t take it...So, when I turned 18, I told my mama that I wanted to leave. I got married, and we moved to Maryland (Haimes-Bartolf 2007:411-412).

The first Monacan to graduate from Amherst's public high school did so in 1972 (Cook 2000; Wood and Shields 2000). The Monacan community still has relatively few college graduates among its members. However, a number of those first Monacans to attend public school later emerged as tribal leaders or advocates in the struggle for state recognition, which the tribe received in 1989. As one member put it:

Thank the Lord I've been doing as good as I do and I've enjoyed working for most of my life, most of the work I've done is helping our people. I helped to get the state recognition in 1989, I fought for that" (Haines-Bartolf 2007).

The Racial Integrity Act remained Virginia law until 1967, when it was overturned by the Supreme Court in *Loving v. Virginia*. Its effects linger in Amherst and the surrounding area, as noted by one Monacan mother, who said,

"My daughter is in middle school, and she had an incident where a little girl said to her, 'at least my mom's not an Issue like yours is.' It's like it's still here....My son was dating a girl and he went and visited the parents several times. Then at one meal, they asked him, 'what's your mom's maiden name?' And that was it. He can't see her anymore" (Haines-Bartolf 2007).

John Haraughty, an Episcopal minister, came to the Bear Mountain mission as its administrator in 1968. He was instrumental in having Virginia outlaw the Plecker-style warning labels still being affixed to birth certificates as of 1972 (Houck and Maxim 1993:125). With the support of Monacan tribal members, he obtained a Federal Farm and Home Loan to purchase 200 acres between Bear Mountain and High Peak. Twenty-nine homes were built at Orchard Hill Estates, the site of a former orchard where

Monacan people had worked. A number of Monacans bought homes in the new development, which today is referred to as “the Hill.”

Along with some of the other workers involved with the mission over the years, Haraughty has been seen in both positive and negative lights by Monacan community members. Some feel he accomplished a great deal that could not have happened without his advocacy. Others feel that he imposed his own agenda onto the Bear Mountain community and that he discouraged some of their early attempts at organized independence.

The same ambivalence has been expressed by older Monacan people about the earlier mission workers: they provided the only education and religious instruction available to Monacan people, they fought against repressive laws that were being applied to Monacans, and they championed the struggle to end segregation in Amherst schools. On the other hand, some favored lighter-skinned people and offered them more opportunities. They also promoted white Christian values without respecting indigenous ways and sometimes encouraged people to leave the mission community. The minister of St. Paul’s church during the 1940s, Reverend Lee, said he believed that “a few of the more advanced and capable people are keeping the others stiffened in their resolve to remain a separate people.” He was of the opinion that those who remained should intermarry with blacks and “find a place in the world” (Wagner 1946).

Historian C.L. Higham describes the agenda and process of Protestant missionary societies in the U.S. and Canada in the years leading up to the establishment of St. Paul’s mission. Missionaries approached Native communities with attitudes typical of white

Americans of that time. They thought of Indians as savages who, because they were capable of rational thought, would embrace Christianity once they had access to its teachings, and throw off their traditional ways of life, their languages and religious practices. “Protestant missionaries...,” she states, “viewed Indians as wretched, degraded, and, most importantly, not white, as they attempted to change them into...Americans” (2000: 215).

Community Values and Identity

This section considers the ways in which Monacan core values and practices may have diverged from those of their neighbors, despite what many saw as assimilation in terms of their loss of language and cultural traditions.

Although the mission provided schooling to Monacan children and offered a clothing bank to Monacans in need, it did not provide much in the way of food. Monacan people had been surviving through subsistence farming and gathering for hundreds of years, and they continued to hunt when possible, as they had for millennia, as well as to grow large gardens. Cooperative networks and sharing strategies enabled the entire group to survive, and these strategies were ingrained in community practices. People were poor, but generosity was highly valued. Family members exchanged goods as needed, and one woman remarked that these practices continue today:

People will...if my garden’s got more than I can put up, then they give it to somebody else...That’s called making do. The people here make do (Cook 2000: 99).

Monacans have continued to practice strategies of reciprocity in order to survive hard times. They come together to help one another when things are difficult. This could include taking up a collection, sharing food or living quarters, and helping to raise children as needed. The recipient is not obligated to repay these favors. In this way, traditions differ markedly from those practiced by the Monacans' neighbors. A tribal member interviewed in 1996 said:

I don't think that anybody ever went hungry or without clothes. Because it was always someone helpin' someone else out. And I believe that that's the reason we've been such a close-knit community. I think it was because we had such close ties. And I don't know of anyone that was ever homeless. Because someone would always take you in, take care of you (Cook:100).

At the same time, there developed during this period an intense awareness of what it meant to be labeled "Issues," to be a third race in a biracial system, looked down upon by all. One boy told a mission worker in the 1930s, "Why should I go to school? No matter how old I get, no one's ever gonna call me Mister" (Wagner 1946). Monacans became ashamed of their heritage or aware that exhibiting pride in it was dangerous. A contemporary Monacan man said he asked his grandmother why the Indian culture had not been passed on. She explained that in earlier days, it was safer to keep it a secret. "She told me with tears in her eyes if the wrong person heard her talking or teaching us those ways, she might not have a place to live the next day."

As Cook has suggested, it was probably during this period that the last vestiges of the Monacan language in Amherst County disappeared, because people were afraid to

teach it to their children and because the community of speakers no longer thought of it as a language of prestige. A handful of middle-aged Monacans have vague childhood memories, during the late 1950s to mid-1960s, of grandparents who could speak a few “Indian” words. One elderly man said of his grandfather in the 1920s that “he could speak ‘em [Indian words] just like those Indians from down in North Carolina [presumably the Cherokees],” implying that his grandfather was fluent in the ancestral indigenous language. However, the same man recalled:

If you will join me—people didn’t want to be learned to speak Indian. They didn’t want...wanted to do it a different way. I think a person, being stuck in this county—and they had no reading and writing at the time—and they was pushed down to dirt and dust. Just like the dirt we come from (Cook: 111).

Because the Monacan tribal designation had been lost over time, some journalists labeled them “Cherokees,” based on flimsy conjecture reported in a Richmond, Virginia newspaper in 1896, which suggested that Monacans descended from a group of Cherokees that had traveled to Washington for meetings and had stayed on in the area. It was not until the publication of *Indian Island in Amherst County*, by local physician Peter Houck in the early 1980s, that the tribe was identified based on its genealogy and on reports of Indian communities along the James River that had preceded the arrival of white settlers. The Cherokee, an Iroquoian-speaking people, sold their last remaining tract of land to the Virginia Burgesses just prior to the Revolutionary War, and most of the Virginia Cherokees had vacated the southwestern region by the turn of the eighteenth century, joining relatives in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia, from whence the majority were forcibly removed in 1838. The Monacans, on the other hand, were the

Siouan speakers who had lived in the Virginia piedmont for several thousand years and whose burial mounds constituted a cultural complex later identified by archaeologists such as Jeffrey Hantman, who connected the Monacan mound complex to a uniquely Monacan history (2004).

Following the victories of the civil rights movement, the women's movement, and the American Indian movement, and their own victory in having their students enter public schools in Amherst at last, Monacan leaders began to envision a future for the tribe. They connected with other tribes in Virginia to pursue shared goals, such as establishing a federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) grant that trained Monacan people to make pottery, which they could then sell. They also teamed up with the Mattaponi and Pamunkey tribes to form the Mattaponi-Pamunkey-Monacan Consortium (MPM), a federally funded Job Training Partnership Act (now called the Workforce Investment Act) program that provided tuition for students entering community colleges and created internship opportunities for tribal members. They set up a day care service, which lasted for two years, and they became a state-registered corporation. They filed a request for state recognition, and after a complicated review process, they received official acknowledgment in 1989. This was viewed as a major accomplishment by the Monacan population—a state-sanctioned validation of the Indian identity they had asserted for so long.

The Monacan Tribe also joined the Virginia Council on Indians, a state advisory council tasked with acting as liaison to the state government about issues concerning Native people. The VCI assisted them in pressuring the Bureau of Vital Statistics to change its regulations regarding the correction of tribal members' birth certificates

concerning the racial designation. Their combined efforts resulted in Governor George Allen signing a landmark bill that simplified the process for American Indians to request corrected racial designations on birth certificates and rescinded the required fee.

In the minds of most Monacan people who attended the Bear Mountain mission school, for those who have attended St. Paul's Church, and for many Monacan descendants today, the area remains a place of collective safety. The school offered the people opportunities for Americanized education, and the Church provided religious instruction as well as spiritual counseling and basic medical care. The mission permitted the community to maintain its own cohesiveness and to express a distinct Indian identity, differentiated from the black and white neighbors around it, as well as from county officials and from the Episcopal diocese. The story of the Monacan people in the twentieth century is ultimately one of continuous struggle to identify as Indian and to maintain their sense of family and community despite overwhelming pressures from the outside world.

CHAPTER FOUR

LEADERSHIP AND IDENTITY

Many Americans have American Indian ancestry, and the question of whether or not a group is a “tribe,” according to the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs, hinges on whether it has maintained political and social distinction from its non-Native neighbors since colonial times and whether it has been formally acknowledged by the U.S. Congress. Although the Monacans have maintained political and social distinction, they have not received federal acknowledgment. One persistent issue, then, is a question of “authenticity” or validity, one that lingers over every non-federally recognized tribe, including the Monacan: is it a “real” tribe or not?

This chapter investigates the complex factors involved in asserting an Indian identity as well as the development of formal leadership structures within the Monacan community during the 1980s and beyond. It also examines the accomplishments of tribal leaders Harry Branham, Ronnie Branham, Kenneth Branham, and Sharon Bryant as the tribal community moved into a statewide and then a more national network of intertribal connections, internalizing in the process ideas then prevalent in discussions about American Indian cultural traditions and language.

In the U.S., American Indian people are identified according to several complicated processes. Legally, a person is an Indian if he is an enrolled member of a “federally recognized” tribe, and this identification can apply on either an individual or a collective level. Biological definitions based the criteria on “blood quantum”: the

percentage of “blood” deemed to determine tribal citizenship; about two thirds of all recognized tribes have a blood quantum requirement. There is no standard for blood quantum from tribe to tribe, and some tribes, such as the Monacan, have no blood quantum requirement. Self-identification is another way Indians establish identity, accepted by the U.S. Census and a few other federal establishments. A cultural identity, however, derives from having been brought up in an Indian community, learning “Indian” or tribal traditions and practices, including language. Some Native people assert that a person or community who has lost the ability to speak an ancestral language cannot be considered Indian (see Jocks 1998:219). While phenotypic features such as straight black hair, brown skin, and brown eyes, continue to mark “Indianness” visually to the American public, Native language is often accepted by other Indians, along with other “traditional” practices, as a cultural marker of tribal identity. (See Garrouette 2003 for an extended analysis of the ways in which American Indian identity is construed.)

The matter becomes more complicated when we consider political identity. Tribes are referred to as “sovereign nations” by the U.S. judiciary system, but no tribe is fully autonomous, and in many instances Congress has asserted plenary power over tribes in order to pursue various land-grabbing schemes and environmental projects. Many tribes now call themselves “nations,” to reflect a more nuanced understanding of inherent sovereignty and distance themselves from anthropological categorizations of “savage,” “barbaric,” or “primitive” labels associated with the term “tribe.” The Monacan tribe is one of these: it legally changed its title from “tribe” to “nation” in the early 1990s. Within the context of a separate “nation,” language becomes a political marker, tying group members together against the non-speaking general public.

Most of the information that follows in this chapter was obtained through personal interviews in 2014 and 2015 with Sharon Bryant and Kenneth Branham, respectively, the present chief and former chief of the Monacan Nation.

Harry Branham

During the early twentieth century, Monacans responded to the natural leadership of several respected individuals, deferring to their decision-making abilities. Reverend Gray, who founded St. Paul's Church and served as its minister for two years, reported that "one old devout Indian man" had been leading church services before he arrived, although he noted that the community get-togethers were likely to evolve into rowdy events as time wore on.



Figure 19. Harry Branham, born 1903.

In the mid-twentieth century, the Monacan men identified as leaders were Harry Branham, Bowman Nuckles, and Floyd Johns. They were recognized as leaders by both the community and church membership; there was no elections and no differentiation between the church vestry and tribal leadership at that time. According to John Haraughty, who arrived at St. Paul's in 1968, Harry was designated as the chief, and he took his duties seriously. Initially, the new minister drew up his own plans for church accomplishments and presented them to the membership. He was full of new ideas, he said, urging the congregation to plan for its future needs. In the church vestry meetings, the men would listen to Haraughty's ideas, but they would refuse to vote at that time, putting off the vote until a future meeting. After some months, the minister finally realized that the men would gather on the lawn after the meetings and discuss each issue with Harry, in order to ascertain his position. Being a thoughtful man, Harry often wanted to think the issues through before coming to a decision. At that point, the new minister realized how the process of leadership worked within the Monacan community and learned to allow more time. There was only an informal system of acclamation for choosing the chief, a tradition that likely dates back to the tribe's earlier history. There were no Bylaws or approved procedures for decision-making. Membership was ascertained by the community's familiarity with its own families' genealogies. There were no application procedures for tribal membership, no tribal cards, and no responsibilities or duties expected of individual tribal members other than voicing their opinions when decisions were made.

Harry presided over the establishment of St. Paul's Homecoming Festival and bazaar in 1969, the development of the Monacan community of homes at Orchard Hill Estates ("The Hill"), and the purchase, by St. Paul's Church, of a five-acre parcel on the hill above the mission, to be used for a recreational area. Another accomplishment was the development of the Monacan Co-operative Pottery, established at the mission in 1979 with a federal Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) grant. Some important pieces were produced through the pottery initiative, including at least one that was sold to the Smithsonian.

Harry served the church and community as chief until he reached an advanced age, at which point he stepped down and turned his leadership duties over to younger tribal members.

Ronnie Branham

The Branham branch of the family continued to exercise leadership as the tribe moved toward a more formal system of organization, and the community chose Ronnie Branham as chief in late 1987. Born February 2, 1945, in Amherst County, Ronnie was the grandson of Harry Branham and the son of Hattie Bell Branham Hamilton. He served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War. Ronnie remained chief until October 1994, when he resigned for health reasons. During his tenure, Buddy Johns and Kenneth Branham served as assistant chiefs, and the tribe began holding tribal membership meetings to discuss issues. One of those was the establishment of the Mattaponi-Pamunkey-Monacan Consortium, or M-P-M. Established through the federal Job Training Partnership Act,

this organization provided funds for tribal members, which helped them to attend community colleges, provided job training assistance that resulted in the job placement of a number of Monacans at the highway department and at a local training center for mentally challenged individuals.



Figure 20. Ronnie Branham, dressed in Plains regalia, and his wife, wearing a ribbon shirt common among Oklahoma tribes.

The organization continues today. For several years, in the 1990s, MPM was able to provide funds for a few of the Virginia tribes to pay an office worker, typically a tribal member, in their respective locations, but funding cuts eventually caused this project to be discontinued. Phyllis Branham Hicks was employed at the new tribal office to document tribal membership, and tribal members Gene Autry Branham, Edith Branham Viar, and Roger Branham were occasionally employed there as well. Phyllis helped to

establish a Museum Committee that included Dr. Jeffrey Hantman from the University of Virginia and Dr. Peter Houck, the local pediatrician who wrote a book about the tribe's history, *Indian Island in Amherst County*. Eventually this book provided some of the documentation necessary for the tribe to obtain state recognition in 1989, which was considered the most significant accomplishment of the tribe by its members at the time. Houck and Haraughty, along with tribal members, lobbied for the required legislation.

Kenneth Branham

In 1995, Kenneth Branham was elected chief, running against Sharon Bryant. He served as chief for the next 16 years; in this section I describe the numerous accomplishments of his administration and the tribe's movements to ascertain its identity first as a tribe and then as an Indian nation.

Kenneth was born in Amherst in 1953, the son of Rufus Howard Branham and Lacie Johns Branham. He attended school at the Bear Mountain Mission through the third grade and was among the first students to enter Elon Elementary in Amherst County, following desegregation. He often tells stories about the discrimination he experienced while growing up in Amherst County, picking apples with family members at the orchards near Bear Mountain.

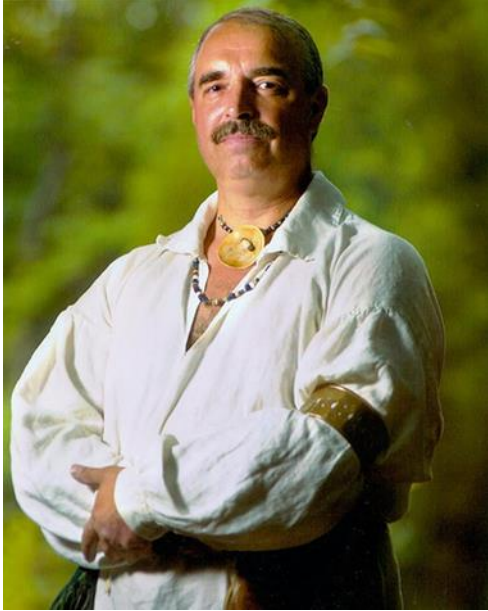


Figure 22. Former Chief Kenneth Branham in 2005. *Roanoke Times* photo.



Figure 21. Bear Mountain, 1998. Author photo.

During Kenneth's tenure, the tribe made unprecedented strides in numerous areas. Several years of successful powwows enabled the tribe to purchase and pay off more than 100 acres of land on Bear Mountain. The purchase required several co-signers, among

whom were Kenneth Branham, Roy Branham, Buddy Johns, and Brenda Garrison. After the land was paid off, it was then placed in trust for the tribe, and additional parcels on and near the mountain were added in subsequent years, some through gift bequests and others through payment of unpaid taxes to the county. The site of an ancestral cemetery, Bear Mountain has long been considered a sacred place for Monacans. Four separate reburial ceremonies were held at this location between 1999 and 2004, returning Monacan ancestral remains to tribally owned land. "It's a happy time that we can return those remains back," Chief Branham said in 2003. "Then, on the other hand, why should we have to do this when they shouldn't have been disturbed in the first place? The reason we have to do this is the ancestors deserve the respect they do. Hopefully, one day there won't be a need for this - they won't be uncovering them..." (*Canku Ota*, "an online newsletter celebrating Native America," Nov. 1, 2003, Issue 99, http://www.turtletrack.org/Issues03/Co11012003/CO_11012003_Monacans.htm).

Kenneth's first year in office was also the year the Episcopal Diocese returned five acres of church land to the tribe, and he officiated at the transfer ceremony. Since acquiring the property, the tribe has made numerous improvements to the buildings and grounds: installation of a heat pump and ductwork, new siding, a ramp extending down the hill to the museum and schoolhouse, new carpet and vinyl flooring, a deck added to the tribal center by a tribal member, and the acquisition of computers and other office machines. The museum has undergone several interior renovations, and the log cabin schoolhouse was completely restored with a series of grants from the Virginia State Legislature. It is now on both state and national registers as a Historic Landmark. Phyllis Hicks, and then Diane Johns Shields, served as Membership Coordinator for the tribe,

documenting tribal genealogies and eventually incorporating a computer program in order to track the genealogies of members. Diane also helped to research grants and conduct historical research.



Figure 23. Monacan Log Cabin Schoolhouse, 2006. Author photo.

The tribe incorporated under state laws and successfully applied for 501(c) 3 status, enabling it to be listed as a nonprofit corporation and to receive grants and donations. Initially incorporated as the “Monacan Indian Tribe,” the tribal leadership later voted to become the “Monacan Indian Nation,” reflecting new ideas about tribal sovereignty that they learned from discussions with other tribal groups. The laws governing nonprofit organizations stipulate that they must have a set of Bylaws, and so the tribe developed Bylaws, which have since been modified several times. It also developed a set of membership regulations.

The tribe continued its annual powwow tradition under Kenneth’s leadership, and each year the powwow grew in size and reputation, becoming one of the best-known venues in the region, with specialty acts like Aztec dancers, live animals such as bison and birds of prey, and high-quality vendors who competed for spots. In 2012, Monacans

celebrated the tribe's twentieth Annual Powwow. Revenues from the powwow continue to support the tribe throughout the year.



Figure 24. Bradley Branham, son of current Assistant Chief Dean Branham, at the Monacan Powwow. Author photo.

Another major accomplishment was the development of a partnership between the tribe and Natural Bridge, which was a privately owned tourist attraction, a National Historic Landmark and Natural Wonder of the World, featuring a unique geologic “bridge” formed by Cedar Creek, a tributary of the James River. At one time the Natural Bridge was owned by Thomas Jefferson. The marketing staff at Natural Bridge was interested in developing a project there that would incorporate Native history of the region, and Tribal Council members suggested creating an interpretive “village” that would portray Monacan life and teach visitors about Native history. The project was enthusiastically endorsed, and Dean Ferguson (Shawnee) was hired as its director. Work began on the village site, located close to the Bridge itself. Dean was assisted by Vicky DiProsperis, a Monacan woman, and they were later joined by Bertie Branham, tribal elder and basket maker.

Within a few years, Kenneth Branham left his job of 22 years to work at the village, becoming a full-time employee at Natural Bridge in 1999. While employed there, he spoke with visitors from 56 countries, and he helped to make more people aware of the Monacan Nation's history and existence. As he learned more about Monacan traditions and culture, he substituted the attire of an eighteenth-century Monacan leader for the Plains-style outfit he had made when he first became chief. Eventually, the other chiefs of Virginia tribes followed his example: although their heritage was Algonquian, some had been wearing Plains-style headdresses rather than the traditional turkey headdresses for decades because they believed the American public recognized only "war bonnets" as symbols of Indian leadership, and because many tribal leaders throughout the East were doing likewise. Kenneth encouraged Monacans to learn more about their tribal history and culture, their traditional lifeways, and their language, and he supported repatriation rituals incorporating Tutelo songs. He later recalled asking his grandmother what she thought of the tribe's efforts to revitalize its culture. He noted that she cried as she responded: "I'm very proud of what you're doing," she said. "Once she told me that," he said, "I knew we were doing the right thing. There was no turning back. You know, I couldn't stop after that if I wanted to" (*Beyond Jamestown*, 2006).



Figure 25. Kenneth Branham carries the Eagle Staff at a Natural Bridge village event. He is followed by Chris French, carrying the Monacan flag, and Bertie Branham, Monacan elder. Kenneth wears a headdress similar to the Iroquois *gustoweh*, with leather leggings and moccasins and a frontier-style cotton shirt.

During Kenneth's tenure, the Monacan Nation decided to begin formal efforts toward federal acknowledgment through Congress, and tribal representatives joined those from five other tribes to make the rounds of Congressional offices to lobby for their cause. In 1995, Kenneth addressed a House Committee on Indian Affairs, along with Chief Ken Adams (Upper Mattaponi); Dr. Helen Rountree, professor emeritus, Old Dominion University; and Dr. Danielle Moretti-Langholtz, an adjunct instructor at the College of William and Mary. From 1996 to 2002, the Monacan Nation applied for and received six consecutive federal grants through the Administration for Native Americans (ANA), enabling it to hire two full-time researchers to develop a formal petition for federal recognition. That work was led by me, with assistance from Diane Johns Shields.

Together, we assembled a historic chronology of the tribe and began the arduous process of collecting the required documentation to satisfy the Bureau of Indian Affairs' eight criteria.

The Monacan Nation joined the Upper Mattaponi, the Chickahominy, Eastern Chickahominy, Rappahannock, and Nansemond on a bill sponsored by Congressman Jim Moran that would acknowledge the six tribes. That effort has been ongoing for fifteen years. Twice the bill has passed the House and stalled in the Senate. The tribes hired Bill Leighty, former Chief of Staff to Virginia Governor Tim Kaine, as their lobbyist for the federal recognition effort, and they established Virginia Indian Tribal Alliance for Life (VITAL), a 501(c)4 corporation, to serve that effort. Initially, VITAL was led by Monacan Mary Belvin Wade. She died in 2003, and her successor, Wayne Adkins (Chickahominy), remains president of VITAL.



Figure 26. Early photo of Virginia tribal chiefs lobbying in D.C. From left: Barry Bass (Nansemond), Stephen Adkins (Chickahominy), Kenneth Branham (Monacan), Marvin Bradby (Eastern Chickahominy), Anne Richardson (Rappahannock), Kenneth Adams (Upper Mattaponi). Photo: Deanna Beacham.

The tribe also obtained a number of other grants that enabled various projects to be completed. The buildings received heating system upgrades, and a ramp was installed on the steep incline up to the tribal center from the museum. Diane Shields established the Monacan Women's Circle, and the women began a small business making and marketing jelly, apple butter and gift baskets. A Culture Class for youth was established by tribal members Daniel Red Elk Gear and Sue Branham Elliott, which continues today under the leadership of Matt Latimer.

The tribe successfully petitioned Virginia Polytechnic and State University (Virginia Tech) to establish a minor concentration in American Indian Studies, and Dr. Sam Cook was hired to direct that program, which also resulted in the establishment of the Virginia Indian Nations' Summit on Higher Education (VINSHE). This annual event brings tribal representatives from throughout Virginia together with university administrators and instructors to discuss American Indian curricula and to increase enrollment of Native students in Virginia universities. That program has been ongoing for fifteen years; during the past five years, the University of Virginia has joined the Summit, and participants from the College of William and Mary and George Mason University have also attended. Recently, a youth mentoring program has also emerged from VINSHE; Native students from middle and high school grades are invited to participate, and events are organized for them throughout the year.



Figure 27. Native students and adults from Virginia meets the 1491s, a Native comedy troupe performing at Virginia Tech, 2014. Author photo.

Tribal representatives from VINSHE participated in the statewide revision of Standards of Learning (SOL) across all grade levels in Social Studies, a sweeping overhaul that removed much of the past-tense language referencing Virginia Indians and incorporated present-day issues as well as historic events; because of the revision, textbooks were changed throughout the state. The Monacan Nation also established a Scholarship Fund, with help from community member R.G. Bryant. An auction benefitting the Fund is held annually at the tribal Homecoming event, and thousands of dollars in scholarships have been disbursed.

Kenneth Branham also presided over Monacan participation in several national events, including the official opening of the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., in 2004. Monacan representatives traveled to the nation's capital, where they participated in a parade involving the largest known gathering of Native communities in history.

From 2003 to 2006, the National Council of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial staged a three-year commemoration of Lewis and Clark's epic journey, which began with Jefferson's letter to Congress requesting funds for the journey. The Monacan Nation was approached several years in advance, to serve as a "homeland tribe," because the events would begin at Monticello. I was the designated representative to the Circle of Tribal Advisors, which met regularly to plan tribal signature events and participation. Through these planning efforts, the Monacan Nation became known to some 50 tribes that had been historically involved and who were now participating in commemorative events. In January 2003, about 80 Native representatives attended the first signature event and opening ceremony at Monticello. A symposium followed at the University of Virginia,

but for Monacans, the highlight was a dinner they hosted for the Native guests, who arrived by bus from Charlottesville. The guests were so moved by the Monacan feast that they gave special songs and stories during the evening and promised to help the tribe's federal recognition efforts.



Figure 28. Opening event at Monticello, January 2003. Circle of Tribal Advisors.

The Virginia Council on Indians (VCI), established by the Code of Virginia in 1988, provided a liaison between the Governor's office the Virginia General Assembly, and the Virginia tribes until it was abolished in 2012. From 2003 to 2006, I served as Chairman of that organization, presiding over the planning, by state officials and organizations, for the 400th anniversary commemoration of the first successful English-speaking settlement at Jamestown. The Virginia tribes were approached collectively

through the VCI and decided to participate. Tribal representatives were chosen from each state-recognized tribe--there were eight tribes at that time—and traveled as a group to Kent County, England in 2006, the location from which John Smith had hailed and also where Pocahontas died. Fifty-six Native people participated in the trip, which began with a send-off event at the National Museum of the American Indian, where a Virginia tribal drum group and dancers performed.



Figure 29. Virginia Indian dancers at NMAI, 2006. From left: Jacob Fortune-Deuber (Rappahannock), Judith Fortune (Rappahannock), Wayne Adkins (Chickahominy), Morgan Faulkner (Upper Mattaponi), Ben Adams (Upper Mattaponi).

In preparation for the commemoration, Monacans joined with seven other state-recognized tribes to form VIAC, the Virginia Indian Advisory Committee, which planned events for the commemoration and helped to arrange the trip to England for tribal representatives. Those representing the Monacan Nation were Monacan Chief Kenneth Branham, George Whitewolf, Dean Branham, Sharon Bryant, Pam Talbott, Carilyn Sue Elliott and her son Rufus, and me.



Figure 30. Monacan delegation to England, 2006. From left: George Whitewolf, Kenneth Branham, Karenne Wood, Sue Elliott, Pam Talbott, Sharon Bryant, Dean Branham, Rufus Elliott. Photo by Powhatan Red-Cloud Owen.

During the trip, tribal members visited schools in England and talked with students, held a community symposium, spoke at a nearby university, and participated as dancers in “The Big Day Out,” an intercultural celebration. Through this event and those that followed in 2007, the Monacan Nation cemented ties with other Virginia tribes, and individuals developed close friendships.



Figure 31. Virginia tribal members at the Big Day Out, 2006. Photo, Jamestown 2007.

In 2007, the tribes hosted their own symposium in Williamsburg, presenting on topics of their choosing and hosting visits from the public to their tribal communities.

In May, members of Virginia tribes welcomed Queen Elizabeth II to the State Capitol in Richmond and participated in Anniversary Weekend at Jamestown. In July of 2007, they hosted the Virginia Indian Intertribal Festival in Hampton, bringing members of six tribes from throughout the U.S. to showcase their dances and cultural traditions. The event was attended by more than 18,000 people. Monacans were present throughout as dancers and tribal historians.



Figure 32. Virginia Indian Welcome Dance at State Capitol, 2007, Visit from Queen Elizabeth II. Front row (L to R): Pam Talbott (Monacan), Karenne Wood (Monacan), Charlene Rollins (Rappahannock), Autumn Custalow (Mattaponi), Morgan Faulkner (Upper Mattaponi); Second row: Glenn Canaday (Chickahominy), Brandon Custalow (Mattaponi), Jacob Fortune-Deuber (Rappahannock), Ben Adams (Upper Mattaponi), Keith Smith (Nansemond). Photo by Deanna Beacham.



Figure 33. Grand Entry at the Virginia Indian Intertribal Festival in Hampton, 2007. Photo by Tony Alter.

Kenneth Branham's tenure as chief ended in 2011, after four terms. He was succeeded by Sharon Bryant, who ran unopposed. Sharon's administration focused primarily on local issues, such as the Women's Circle and tribal Food Bank. Although the tribe remained involved in the federal recognition effort, its participation in other state and national events was minimal. It remains to be seen what legacies Sharon's administration will produce. Her term ended in June 2015, and so did her life: she died of liver cancer after a remarkably short illness. Dean Branham was elected as chief and Pam Thompson as Assistant Chief.



Figure 34. Assistant Chief Dean Branham and Chief Sharon Bryant. Photo, Bill Johns.

CHAPTER FIVE

AMERICAN INDIAN ACTIVISM, THE LAKOTA LANGUAGE, AND THE TUTELO REVIVAL

During recent centuries, the Monacans experienced the same set of traumatic events as other American Indian peoples of the southeastern United States: recurrent relocations and dispossessions; poverty; legally sanctioned state and local policies that de-legitimated their Indian identity and replaced it with a generic label, “colored”; and unrelenting persecution from the neighboring non-Native community. They were relegated to the lowest social position in a tri-racial system, despised by both black and white neighbors, and prevented from entering mainstream society due to substandard education and lack of access to what they called “public jobs.”

This chapter examines the resurgence of Monacan identity and pride as changes in social attitudes and connections with other tribes and events occurred following the American Indian “Red Power” movement of the early 1970s and the arrival of a Monacan man, George Whitewolf, who brought notions of intertribal activism to Amherst County along with his knowledge of the Lakota language and cultural traditions. In addition, as tribal members began research about the Tutelo language, various materials were discovered, and a few people began to think about reviving the language.

Most Monacans of the previous generation and earlier have suffered from seriously low collective and individual self-esteem throughout most of their lives, in addition to isolation from the larger American Indian world. Many elders have said that

they believed Monacans were the only Indian people remaining in Virginia, and that they were unaware, until the 1970s, even of the existence of the Powhatan-descended tribes east of Richmond. The Monacans in Amherst were not involved with any of the American Indian protest events in the 1960s, they were barely aware of the Red Power activism of the 1970s, and it was not until the late 1980s that the tribe decided to pursue state recognition, after such acknowledgment had already been afforded to seven other Virginia tribes.

George Whitewolf

One leader whose presence changed the way some Monacans thought about themselves and their identity was George Whitewolf. Born George Branham in the Monacan satellite community of Glen Burnie, near Baltimore, Maryland in 1942, he was the son of George Albert Branham and Doris Branham Riley, fondly known as "Grandma Dumplin." This section examines his powerful and lasting impact on the Monacan people and their beliefs about language.

George was a compelling speaker and a passionate advocate for the rights of American Indians. He moved to Amherst County from Maryland in 1991 and immediately began working toward his vision for the tribe. At varying times, sometimes simultaneously, he represented the Monacan tribe as a powwow organizer, Native craftsman and vendor, Tribal Council member, spiritual advisor, and assistant chief. He was also the advisor to the youth culture class and the Bear Mountain Dancers of the Monacan Nation in his later years.



Figure 35. George Whitewolf at the Scholarship Auction, 2008. Photo by Bill Johns.

George came of age at a time when young American Indians had begun to publicly question the way the U.S. government had wronged their peoples, abrogated sacred treaties and removed many tribes to reservations where opportunities were scarce, enacted laws to remove lands from tribal control, restricted tribal sovereignty and relocated Native people to urban slums. As noted by Native authors Paul Chaat Smith and Robert Warrior, the American Indian activism that took place during the late 1960s and 1970s constituted a “campaign of resistance and introspection unmatched in [that] century,” which was, for American Indians, as significant as the antiwar and counterculture movement was for whites or the civil rights movement for blacks (1996:x). The National Indian Youth Council was formed in 1961 and played a major role in activism focused on fishing rights disputes in the Northwest. In 1969, 89 American Indians, many of them students from urban areas, organized the takeover of Alcatraz Island in San Francisco Bay. The American Indian Movement, founded in 1968, was involved in numerous protests and occupations, including the “Trail of Broken

Treaties” in 1972, which culminated in the takeover of the Bureau of Indian Affairs building in Washington, D.C., and the armed standoff at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1973.

Because George grew up outside of the nation’s capital in an urban Indian community, he was more aware of these events than the Monacans in Amherst were. His first wife, also Native, owned a small store that sold handmade buckskin clothing, beadwork, silver, jewelry, and other American Indian arts and cultural items, and Indian people often stopped by to visit. George was a plumber, but he developed skills as a leather craftsman, making clothing and accessories. He grew interested in the events that were taking shape around the Red Power movement. He visited the Pine Ridge Lakota reservation in South Dakota, where he claimed to have been ceremonially “adopted” by the Red Shirt family, and he met Lakota holy men Frank Fools Crow and Dawson Has No Horses. He participated in ceremonies and was introduced to the Lakota language. Over a period of years, he experienced an awakening to his own Monacan heritage, and he identified with Indians from other tribes whose languages are Siouan, particularly a tribe of “Sioux” Indians of South Dakota who call themselves the Oglala Lakota. He began to practice Lakota ceremonies and believed himself to be a spiritual leader whose purpose was to help his own people to remember their traditional Indian ways, including their “Sioux” language. In later conversations with Monacans, George reported that some Lakota people had told him they knew about their Monacan relatives in the east, and that they retained stories about a time when both “Sioux” groups lived together.

The American Indian Movement (AIM) established the International Indian Treaty Council (IITC) in 1974, to focus on issues such as treaty and land rights,

protection of indigenous children, protection of sacred sites, and religious freedom.

George was an active participant in some of the early meetings held in Washington, D.C., and he met a number of Native leaders, including spiritual leaders from the Hopi and Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) peoples who later went on to address the United Nations regarding treaty violations. George's home, near Ellicott City, Maryland, became a stopping place for Native activists, according to his friend, the Lumbee professor David Wilkins, who wrote George's obituary in the Native weekly newspaper, *Indian Country Today* (<http://sixties-1.blogspot.com/2010/07/obit-george-whitewolf.html>.) George began to conduct ceremonies for his Native visitors at his home, and he was invited to visit American Indian communities in other parts of the country. He saw himself as a spiritual leader who had studied Indian ceremonies and healing.

By this time, George had established himself as a craftsman and powwow vendor, and he began to organize his own powwow events. He developed an impressive list of contacts and powwow colleagues and learned how to stage a lucrative event. In 1991, following a divorce, he moved to Amherst County to connect with his own people. He encouraged Monacans to develop more cultural activities, promoted powwow dancing to Monacan youth, and began conducting Lakota-style sweat ceremonies at Bear Mountain. In 1992, he organized the first Monacan powwow, which was hugely successful, netting more than \$15,000 in two days. He later said, "I told these people here [Monacans], 'Let me do this powwow, and I'll fill up the parking lot,' and they didn't believe me. They said it'd never happen. But I did it, and they were all amazed."



Figure 36. George displayed his handmade clothing and accessories for sale in England, 2006. Also shown are Pam Talbott (back) and Sharon Bryant, wearing regalia that George helped them to make. Author photo.

George opened his own American Indian store in Amherst, which remained a struggling venture throughout its existence. He sold Native-themed clothing, books, jewelry, and other items, including the leather items he made. He coordinated the Monacan powwow for the first four years while teaching Monacans how to stage the event, and he coordinated additional powwows in other parts of Virginia and as far away as New Jersey, as part of his livelihood.

Although George was a charismatic speaker, he was a controversial leader. At one point, after he had turned the organization of the Monacan powwow over to the tribe, he became angry over some perceived slight, and he held another powwow in direct competition with the Monacan powwow, out of spite. For this, the tribe voted to revoke

his tribal membership. Another time, members of the Red Shirt family from South Dakota visited a Monacan membership meeting to inform the Monacans that the Red Shirts had never adopted George into their family. For several years, George kept a low profile. He continued to organize out-of-state powwows and to run his store. Eventually, he was able to convince several influential Monacans of his integrity, and he was voted back into the tribe. He participated in the Monacan delegation that went to England in 2006, and he was elected Assistant Chief. He served as a spiritual leader to some of his own people, and he worked patiently with Monacan children to teach them the “Indian culture” he knew: how to make dance outfits, the importance of values such as respect, the nature of the traditions and ceremonies he had learned, and the Native language he valued—Lakota. He died in 2010, at age 67, and his funeral was attended by both Indians and non-Indians from throughout Virginia and beyond.

Why Lakota?

Until Lynchburg physician Peter Houck’s book, *Indian Island in Amherst County*, appeared in the early 1980s, Monacan descendants knew nothing of their linguistic heritage, believing themselves to be descended from the Cherokee, whose language is Iroquoian. Those elders who did know “Indian” words were unaware of their origins, and any younger people who might have been interested in tribal heritage were precluded from attending institutions of higher learning. In this section I consider the development of a language ideology among Monacan people, which emerged from a pan-Indian movement beginning in the 1970s that identified Lakota people as authentic cultural

practitioners who spoke a Siouan language—a possible substitute for their own language, now fallen into disuse.

Anthropologists Frank Speck and James Mooney visited the tribes east of Richmond in the 1920s and documented what remained of the Powhatan language, but no ethnographers arrived at the Bear Mountain mission—only eugenics researcher Arthur Estabrook and his *Mongrel Virginians* coauthor, Sweet Briar professor Ivan McDougle. The Monacans remained ensconced and oppressed in Amherst, isolated from the larger world in some respects.

In the 1960s, the anti-war and counterculture movement coincided with the American Indian Movement's protest initiatives to focus national attention on the problems faced by Native peoples in the U.S. As early as 1971, Hertzberg noted that “hippies” were drawn to American Indian teachings but tended to romanticize Indians on a variation of the “noble savage” theme (1971:296). This imagery relied on stereotypes of Indians as environmental stewards, wise elders, and medicine men. Because Hollywood films had focused for decades on the “Wild West,” following in the tradition of Buffalo Bill's famous show, most Americans thought of Indians as Plains warriors riding on horseback, wearing war bonnets. They still do. Of all the Plains tribes, the Lakota perhaps best exemplified that image. Disillusioned with American culture, a number of young non-Native people came to the Sioux reservations seeking indigenous wisdom and spiritual guidance. Some stayed to become allies during the violent confrontations that followed.

As tensions within the American Indian Movement escalated, young Indians from various tribes flocked to the protest sites: first to Alcatraz, where they established an “Indians of All Tribes” coalition; then to Washington, D.C. during the Trail of Broken Treaties; and on to South Dakota, where political mayhem exploded at the Pine Ridge reservation in 1972. Traditionalists attempted to unseat their tribal chairman, Dick Wilson, who manipulated a private police force called the “Guardians of the Oglala Nation,” referred to colloquially as “Wilson’s GOON Squad.” In February 1973, hundreds of Indians showed up at Pine Ridge for the funeral of Ben Black Elk, a revered elder and medicine man. Ben was the son of the holy man Nicholas Black Elk, who coauthored the Lakota religious classic *Black Elk Speaks* (Neihardt 1993). Many of the mourners and some of the hippies were still in town when the American Indian Movement took over the hamlet of Wounded Knee, the same location where the massacre of Chief Big Foot’s Minniconjou Lakota people had taken place in 1890. They began an occupation that drew the FBI and national newspaper reporters to the Oglala Nation for the next 71 days (Smith and Warrior 1996). Two years later, two FBI agents were gunned down near Wounded Knee, resulting in charges against three Indian activists, only one of whom, Leonard Peltier, was found guilty and imprisoned (Matthiessen 1983).

George Whitewolf was not present at Pine Ridge during the Wounded Knee occupation or its aftermath, but the medicine man Frank Fools Crow, whose ceremonies he had attended, was the Oglala traditional chief who told American Indian Movement leaders Russell Means and Dennis Banks to make a stand at Wounded Knee (Smith and Warrior 1996:200). Considering himself a “Lakota Sioux” by virtue of the Red Shirt family’s supposed adoption, and acquainted with several Pine Ridge residents, George

was drawn into Indian activism after the Wounded Knee occupation, indirectly, having listened to the stories of several Oglala Lakota Indians who had been at “the Knee.”

One of the most critical factors contributing to the popularity of Lakota spiritual traditions and language during this period, among Indians and non-Indians alike, was the influence of *Black Elk Speaks: Being the Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux* (Neihardt 1993), which had been delivered in the Lakota language by Nicholas Black Elk to German-born poet John Neihardt and then translated into English by Black Elk’s son, Ben, the medicine man whose funeral drew so many Native mourners in 1973. Part autobiography, part spiritual guidebook, part tribal history, the book failed to make much of an impression on the general public when first published in 1932. Reissued in 1961, the book’s message immediately reverberated among counterculture groups and young Indian activists struggling to come to terms with the dissolution of traditional spiritual practices within their own communities. While scholars have debated the authenticity of Black Elk’s message as filtered through Neihardt, American Indians of the period tended to accept the book and its teachings unequivocally as a spiritual message from a holy man of the old days, one who had witnessed Custer’s Battle of Little Big Horn as a child and who had survived the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee. In his 1971 preface to that edition of the book, the nation’s leading Native scholar, Vine Deloria, Jr., suggested that it may have been the only religious classic of the twentieth century. It remains the best-selling book of all time about an American Indian (SUNY Press review, 2008).

According to Deloria,

the most important aspect of the book... is not its effect on the non-Indian populace...but upon the contemporary generation of young Indians who have

been aggressively searching for roots of their own in the structure of universal reality. To them the book has become a North American bible of all tribes. They look to it for spiritual guidance, for sociological identity, for political insight, and for affirmation of the continuing substance of Indian tribal life (Neihardt 1993: xv).

An important feature of the book is that it describes, in detail, Lakota values and practices, along with various spiritual events and ceremonies experienced or conducted by Black Elk during his years developing into and acting as a holy man. It therefore provides a blueprint for anyone wishing to conduct such ceremonies. Black Elk's grandson, the medicine man Wallace Black Elk, also wrote a book entitled *The Sacred Ways of the Lakota* (1990), detailing Lakota ceremonies further. Many such books have followed, on Lakota traditions and on the language itself, by both Native and non-Native authors. Information is thus readily accessible through local bookstores, American Indian stores, and powwow vendors.

When George Whitewolf moved to Amherst in 1991, he brought this knowledge with him, to an Indian community that had lost most of its own spiritual traditions and its language. He began to influence Monacans and to teach them what he had learned about "being Indian," as he called it. He conducted sweat ceremonies, adoption ceremonies, and vision quests for Native and non-Native individuals. For the rest of his life, he stressed the idea that the "Lakota Sioux" and the "Monacan Sioux" were closely related, and he argued that Monacans should learn to speak Lakota as a "living language" rather than to learn Tutelo, which he called "dead." He believed that he had learned to be Indian from "real Indians," and on more than one occasion he told Monacan individuals that he had

come to Amherst to “teach them how to be Indian,” a pronouncement that was not well received. He would occasionally tell the tribal membership that some people had learned what they know about being Indian from a book, but that he had learned it from “livin’ Indian.” At the same time, he remained somewhat open-minded about the value of academic knowledge, and he stressed his respect for several researchers with whom he and the Monacan tribe had built collaborative relationships.

The idea that Monacans and Lakotas are related refers not only to a shared linguistic origin and perceived cultural heritage but also to a Lakota concept, “Mitakuye oyasin,” said at the end of Lakota ceremonies and often cited in pan-Indian literature. It means, “all my relations” or “we are all related.” In the Lakota world view, all things considered to have a life spirit are relatives. Among American Indians, Monacans and Lakotas are considered more closely related to one another than either tribe is to Indian groups whose languages are not of Siouan origin. On the other hand, numerous Siouan languages are still spoken: Mandan, Crow, the Dhegiha languages of the southern Plains, and others—and Monacans are related to these Siouan speakers as well—but Monacans have not considered the idea of learning to speak one or more of these other languages. The idea that Monacans should speak Lakota originated with George Whitewolf. Those Monacans who study Lakota language and traditions today are those who identified with George spiritually and who believe themselves to be carrying on his legacy.

In 1993, at a gathering known as the Lakota Summit V, about 500 representatives of some 40 bands and tribes of Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota from the U.S. and Canada gathered to consider shared concerns regarding their traditional spiritual beliefs and practices. The group endorsed a document that came to be known as “War against the

Exploiters of Lakota Spirituality.” It targets “non-Indian ‘wannabes,’ hucksters, cultists, commercial profiteers and self-styled ‘New Age shamans’ and their followers” who have appropriated Lakota spiritual traditions for their own purposes, some for profit. The document specifically denounces and rejects any self-styled medicine man who enables “the abuse of our sacred ceremonies and spiritual practices by outsiders.” It has been published on numerous websites and was reprinted by Ward Churchill (1994), a Native Studies professor whose own American Indian heritage was repeatedly questioned.

The issue then arises as to whether Monacan people who pray and conduct ceremonies in Lakota would be considered outsiders and shunned by Lakota traditionalists. The declaration presumes that Lakota ceremonies are cultural property, owned by the tribe. Lakota spiritual leaders undergo years of training before they receive permission to conduct ceremonies. Some Monacans have wondered whether George was commissioned by Frank Fools Crow or another holy man to conduct Lakota ceremonies in Virginia and elsewhere, as George claimed, or whether he exaggerated his relationships with medicine men. Others maintain, based on George’s affirmations, that Indian spiritual leaders at Pine Ridge welcomed him as a brother and taught him their secrets.

Another issue arises in terms of how Monacan identity is constructed. The Lakota tribes are federally recognized, while the Monacan is not. In the absence of a federal relationship, some would argue that Monacans cannot assert an Indian identity at all. In that case, a Monacan who prays and conducts ceremonies in Lakota could perhaps be considered one of the “wannabes” against whom the declaration is directed. Such notions, involving both cultural and biological authenticity, as well as intellectual property rights

concerning the “owning” of ceremonies or even the languages in which they are conducted, demonstrate the confusion that surrounds American Indian identities today.

Whether Monacans are entitled to appropriate Lakota cultural property or not, the realm of nationalism arises, along with Benedict Anderson’s (1991) theory of “imagined communities.” The Lakota imagine their nation comprising the “Seven Council Fires” tribes, with a population of 90,000 in South Dakota alone, and they orient themselves within the larger Great Sioux Nation of Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota speakers. The Monacan population barely exceeds 2,500 today—more than half of whom live outside Virginia. In both cases, “nation” refers not only to living members but also to ancestors of hundreds or thousands of years.

The study of linguistic data, based on sound change analysis, suggests that the Monacan and Lakota groups have lived as separate entities for perhaps 3,000 years (Dixon 2002). To posit that the two groups are related based on their linguistic heritage thus enters a realm of time immemorial, a past with such depth that scientific conclusions are murky. Perhaps the stories of the Ancient Ones would have shed light on the matter, but these appear to have been lost, along with most Monacan traditional spiritual practices.

The construction of Monacan identity is impacted not only by the history of the community itself, but also by the history of the larger American Indian community and the ways in which being Monacan is thought to relate to that history. During much of the twentieth century, Monacans lived in isolation from contact with other American Indian groups, imagining that their experiences were unique. One elderly Monacan woman

noted that she learned about a few Indians in school, such as Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse, but that Monacans as a rule were only vaguely aware of the contemporary existence of any other tribes, none east of the Mississippi.

The leadership of Ronnie Branham, Kenneth Branham, and George Whitewolf drew the Monacan community into a statewide and national American Indian sphere, assuring Monacans that they were not alone in their experience of dispossession and persecution, and that there were other tribes who shared their linguistic heritage. At the early powwows, Monacans interacted for the first time with members of American Indian tribes from throughout the country who had come to dance and to set up as vendors. Some Monacans have traveled to Episcopal conferences where they met other Native Episcopalians, and other Monacans have visited Indian reservations in South Dakota and elsewhere. This exposure caused a profound shift in Monacan conceptions of identity.

When Ronnie Branham became chief, he worked with George to make Plains-style regalia (see Figure 18) and when Kenneth Branham was elected, he also constructed an imitation eagle-feather war bonnet and Plains-style clothing. The Monacan tribe voted to pay for that clothing. Many Virginia chiefs were wearing Plains-style regalia and either imitation eagle-feather war bonnets or traditional turkey-feather headdresses, beginning as early as 1920 when they began wearing regalia for public events at the urging of Frank Speck. Many Native leaders from Eastern tribes also wore Plains-style regalia from about 1920-1960, believing that they needed to assert an Indian identity but that the American public would only recognize a Western-style Indian.

By the turn of the twenty-first century, Kenneth had learned about eighteenth-century Native men's clothing from his work at the Natural Bridge interpretive village, and he began wearing this clothing publicly, along with a modified Iroquois-style *gustoweh* headdress instead of the Plains-style war bonnet. Other leaders from Eastern tribes had begun doing likewise, some for decades.

When chiefs from Plains tribes announced plans to visit Virginia in 2003, for the events commemorating the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, Chief Branham and others recognized a potential source of embarrassment for Virginia tribes—the Plains tribal leaders had real eagle-feather headdresses and long traditional histories of their use. He spoke with other tribal leaders in Virginia about this situation. Without ever making their intentions public, chiefs uniformly changed their outfits to reflect a more traditional Eastern-style headdress, some featuring turkey feathers as worn by their predecessors prior to colonization.



Figure 37. As Chief, Kenneth Branham addresses the Monacan powwow audience wearing a modified Iroquois-style *gustoweh* headdress to honor the tribe's historic connection to Iroquois people through the Tutelo, along with an early-18th-century frontiersman-style shirt with finger-woven belt and leg ties, and copper arm bands. Author photo, 2003.



Figure 38. In this 1989 photo, Virginia chiefs offer their yearly tribute of game to Gov. Jerry Baliles. On the left, one tribal leader wears a Plains-style war bonnet while another (right) has a turkey-feather headdress. Other Virginia chiefs wearing war bonnets are visible in the background. Photo: Special Collections, Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.



Figure 39. Virginia chiefs now wear traditional turkey-feather headdresses or Iroquois-influenced headpieces, including the beaded Glengarry cap worn by Chief Ann Richardson. Long fringe still reflects traditional Plains-style clothing. From left, Chief Ann Richardson (Rappahannock), Chief Kenneth Branham (Monacan), Chief Ken Adams (Upper Mattaponi), Chief Barry Bass (Nansemond), Chief Stephen Adkins (Chickahominy). Photo by Joanne Kimberlin, *The Virginian Pilot*, (June 10, 2009).

Some of George Whitewolf's followers still wear Plains-style clothing such as beaded vests and fringed moccasins, and they participate in Lakota-style rituals. They have studied Lakota traditions and language, based on George's belief that Monacans and Lakotas were closely related. They are among the group advocating for Monacans to learn to speak Lakota.

Danny Gear, Lawrence Dunmore, and the Tutelo Language Revival

An important leader in the emerging discussion about language and potential revitalization was Danny Red Elk Gear, a Monacan man who descended from the Clark family in Rockbridge, the county adjoining Amherst's western border. This section considers the effects on Monacan language ideologies of two men who attempted to gather linguistic materials on the Tutelo language and to learn or teach it to others.

Adopted at birth, Danny had also been raised mostly in Maryland. As a young man, he developed numerous connections with Maryland and Virginia Indian tribal members, and he was ceremonially adopted by Sun Eagle, a spiritual practitioner who lived on the Mattaponi Reservation. Because of these relationships, Danny was acquainted with traditional practices among various tribes, and he became interested in the Tutelo language, which he learned about by researching Monacan history on his own. He traveled to the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia to collect taped recordings of Tutelo songs that were archived there on wax cylinders, and he gathered other materials related to Tutelo culture, such as Frank Speck's book on the Tutelo adoption ritual (1942).

Danny applied for membership in the Monacan tribe in 1995 and, after supplying affidavits from his natural family, was acknowledged as a member. He and his wife moved to Amherst, and he became active within the tribe as a powwow dancer and arena director, and as a tribal council member. Danny established a drum circle for men and boys, which became known as Muddy Creek. He advocated for revitalizing the Tutelo language and for writing and singing drum songs in that language.



Danny Red Elk Gear, 2013. Photo, Alicia Gear.

In 1996, the tribe received the first of six consecutive federal Administration for Native Americans grants and was operating an office where Diane Johns Shields and I researched the history of the tribe and developed an annotated, chronological bibliography. One of the sources we discovered the following year was Guilia Oliverio's (1997) dissertation, which compiled all of the known work of the various linguists who had studied Tutelo. Danny started a dance group for tribal youth and began teaching

culture classes with another tribal member, Sue Branham Elliott. Learning basic words and phrases in the Tutelo language, taken from Oliverio's work, was a part of this class until about 2002.

Disagreements about culture and language occasionally erupted between Danny and George Whitewolf as to which language should be taught to tribal youth and how Monacans should practice spiritual traditions. Eventually Danny, who worked in Washington, D.C. and came home to Amherst only on weekends, retreated from tribal leadership and stopped teaching the Monacan youth group and culture class. For several years, the group did not meet. George revived it and became its leader until he died in 2010; Danny died in 2014.

Another pivotal figure in the resurgence of Tutelo as a language possibility was Lawrence Dunmore, a member of the Occaneechi Band of Saponi Indians in Hollister, North Carolina. The Saponi were one of the tribes of the Monacan/Tutelo alliance during colonial times, and this group had removed from Virginia, tracing its history to the south-central part of the piedmont. Lawrence also discovered the documentation that existed for Tutelo, and during the 1990s he set himself to the task of learning to speak it. He collected the songs from Philadelphia as well, and he taught himself to sing them and to do several of the Tutelo dances that Kurath (1981) describes. He developed a series of language lessons for Occaneechi tribal members, which he shared with Diane Johns Shields and me.



Occaneechi tribal member Lawrence Dunmore, telling stories, 2000. Author photo.

During this period, Monacan tribal council members discussed the possibilities for revitalizing the Tutelo language and for teaching the language lessons to Monacan people. One of the issues that emerged was a desire to keep the language knowledge limited to those who have a legitimate claim to descend from the Monacan/Tutelo alliance. Some council members were concerned about members of the public or academic community having broad access to the language, because “we don’t know what they’ll do with it.” Several tribal members recalled hearing from older family members about the period when Estabrook and McDougale came into the community and then published *Mongrel Virginians* (1926), an experience that still embarrasses present-day Monacans. Others complained that the tribe has often wasted its time working with scholars who finished their projects and then abandoned the tribe, an experience some of them found to be hurtful. These ideologies, which at times caused ambivalence or conflict, are reflective of Gal’s (2002) findings that within a single speech community, multiple ideologies sometimes emerge. Additionally, in the case of another indigenous speech community, Debenport has shown the “co-presence of anxiety regarding the inappropriate circulation of cultural knowledge and the emergent belief that the

technology of writing is uniquely suited to reversing patterns of language shift” (2013); presumably, the technology of writing is also well suited to reclaiming a language that is no longer spoken, if written lesson materials exist to teach. For the reasons outlined above, the council voted to minimize public access to the language, and not to publish language lessons online or in the tribal newsletter, as the Occaneechi had done.

Toward the end of the 1990s, after passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA, 1990), the Monacan leadership became interested in learning whether any federally sponsored agencies held remains of their ancestors. Several collections of remains were discovered to be housed at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Because one collection of remains had been excavated from Orange County with an intent to repatriate, the Monacan Nation was able to successfully petition for the repatriation of those remains. A tribal reburial ceremony was held, and Lawrence Dunmore officiated, leading Monacans in singing the old Tutelo songs for the first time in hundreds of years, as the remains were laid to rest. A total of four reburial ceremonies were held in the next few years, each involving a specific collection of human remains. In one case, in 2000, the remains were received through permission of the federal NAGPRA Committee (Stockes 2000). Although the Monacan tribe is not federally recognized, its representatives were able to present a convincing case for return of the remains.

The first reburial took place during the period when George Whitewolf was not participating in tribal leadership due to his banishment. Danny Red Elk Gear was still involved, and Kenneth Branham was the chief. The reburial ceremony was conducted in English, but Lawrence Dunmore attended and sang songs in Tutelo. No one spoke or

sang in Lakota, and there was no discussion about why that should be so. Tribal members who planned the event felt powerfully about using the ancestral language so that their relatives from the next world would recognize them and their intentions in laying the remains to rest. At three of the four reburial events, Lawrence attended and helped with the ceremony. At the fourth, tribal members attempted to sing the songs without a leader. Lawrence subsequently moved to Maryland. He, too, withdrew from tribal leadership.

Since that time, the tribe has not encountered any additional large collections of remains, and there have been no reburial ceremonies. Recently, a few American Indian remains were given to the tribe. It has been suggested, by one council member who follows George Whitewolf's teachings, that he should lead a ceremony using the Lakota language. Several tribal members commented on this idea, and no ceremony has occurred.

Although the most vocal proponents of the Tutelo language are no longer active within tribal leadership, a group of tribal members still exists who feel strongly about reintroducing the Tutelo language. This group posits that Monacans are more closely related to the language and land of their direct ancestors than to a tribe located thousands of miles away and a historic connection thousands of years in the past. For both groups, Native consciousness and Native spirituality figure prominently in the construction of Monacan identity. For both, language emerges as a means through which spiritual relationships are nurtured and perpetuated.

CHAPTER SIX

CONTEMPORARY MONACAN IDENTITY AND TRIBAL ACTIVITIES

During the past two generations, remarkable changes have come to the Monacan community at Bear Mountain. Access to public schooling and the overthrow of Jim Crow segregation have permitted the Monacans to move from a relatively isolated situation, where community functions revolved around St. Paul's Church and interactions with non-Native neighbors were fraught with tension, to one in which their people are participants in integrated communities while also maintaining tribal identities.

In this chapter I outline the contemporary community at Bear Mountain, the activities that bring Monacan tribal members together, and the communicative practices I identified during tribal events. For the information included here, I drew on my own research and experience working within the Monacan community. I consulted Rosemary Whitlock's 2008 book, *The Monacan Indian Nation: The Drums of Life*. Ms. Whitlock is a Monacan woman who interviewed me and 26 other Monacan people for her book. I also referred to Isabel Wagner's 1946 report as a mission worker, "Survey of St. Paul's Mission." None of this material has been presented previously. Although tribal members from the Amherst community are as familiar with the context of their community as I am, some of this material dates back before the younger generations were involved as is thus valuable as a historic reference point. Some of the unique Monacan practices, such as the card game described below, are practiced so rarely that they may be in danger of disappearing.

Elders

Elderly Monacans, those over 60 who spent their early years in Amherst County, recall growing up with hardship, labor, and poverty, but almost all say they did not feel deprived. Their families taught them commitment to one another, and this value remains embedded with them today. They recall helping their parents as tenant farmers, planting crops, chopping wood, and cooking for the family, even as children. Their mothers made their clothing from whatever material was at hand, and shoes were hard to come by. They produced almost all of their own food by hunting, raising occasional pigs, and by growing large gardens permitted by their landlords. Some landlords split their crop with them, while others took as much as ninety percent. Monacans canned and preserved their surplus for the winter, and sugar was a precious commodity. They were permitted to obtain items at the general store on credit, and the landlord subtracted their account from their wages at the end of the season, sometimes leaving little cash for the rest of the year (Wagner).

These elders speak happily about their social events at the church, when people would gather for special occasions, bringing cakes and other dishes to share. They held dances in their homes, especially during harvest season, when the community would gather at each house in succession to help bring in the crop. Bluegrass music was popular, and everyone learned the “flatfoot” style of dancing. Life was hard, they say, and they remember being treated with disrespect on a regular basis by both white and black Amherst residents, along with hearing the hated word, “Issue.” It was not the word they minded, they say, as much as the look on the face of the person delivering the insult.

Many speak wistfully of their wishes, as young people, to continue their educations rather than having to go to work. Few finished high school, but only a handful are illiterate.

All elders agree that their families rarely talked about their Indian identity and did not pass on cultural traditions involving songs, dances, or stories. A few did learn practical skills such as gathering medicinal plants, harvesting wild foods, making baskets, and quilting. They recall their mothers forcing them to “take a spring tonic,” which consisted of a ball of pine resin, which they hated to swallow; having to drink bitter horehound teas when their throats hurt; and searching for ginseng in the woods, which they call “gin-sang” and which they could sell. Many of the men were active hunters, most using firearms rather than bows or crossbows. State law now provides that tribally registered Virginia Indians are not required to obtain hunting or fishing licenses in Virginia, but this is a recent development.

The elders feel intense pride in their Native identity, and most were thrilled when the Monacan tribe was officially acknowledged by the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1989. They are pleased to assert their heritage and speak with respect of their own elders and ancestors, whom they feel suffered more than they did, in order to maintain the community of Native people at Bear Mountain. Almost all believe that circumstances in Amherst have vastly improved; although incidents of racism still occasionally occur, usually directed at them by other elderly local people who are not Monacan, these instances are rare.

Those whose families left Bear Mountain experienced a different upbringing, with more opportunities for jobs and education in places like Glen Burnie, Maryland, where a

satellite community was established during the first half of the twentieth century. They were able to attend high school and sometimes college or trade school. Like the Bear Mountain elders, they report that their parents did not often mention being Indian or engage in specific cultural practices; they were attempting to assimilate within the larger suburban community. They did not experience the racism that Amherst Monacans did. In some cases they regret growing up elsewhere but generally believe that their families made the right choice by leaving.



Figure 40. Lacie Branham, mother of former chief Kenneth Branham, in 2005. She walked on in 2014.



Figure 41. Victoria Hamilton, who walked on in 2010. Photo: Diane Shields.

Mid-Life Generation

Monacans in the 35- to 60-year range were able to attend public school in Amherst, although many began their educations in the one-room mission school. Some did not graduate from high school because the intense name-calling and harassment they received from white classmates was painful for them to encounter on a daily basis, and they withdrew. Others did graduate, and a few continued their educations. One woman became a nurse, and another was ordained by the Episcopal Church later in her life. Men have worked at factories, as electricians and plumbers, in construction, and at other blue-collar jobs. A number of Monacans, mostly women, have worked in housekeeping and food operations at the Central Virginia Training Center, a facility for intellectually challenged adults located in Lynchburg. A few men whose families left have achieved rank in the military, and two men have obtained doctoral degrees. I believe I am the first tribally enrolled Monacan woman to pursue a Ph.D.

Monacans in this age range are most likely to show interest in tribal activities, to run for Tribal Council, and to organize projects to benefit the tribe, such as the Annual

Powwow. In recent years, however, participation in tribal activities by Monacans living in the area has decreased dramatically, and often it is the people who grew up outside the tribal community who are more active. Some middle-aged Monacans have read American Indian histories, and others have become involved with intertribal powwows throughout the state and beyond. Some still live in the Monacan housing development and former orchard known as “the Hill,” off Kenmore Road about 10 miles from the Tribal Center. Others have moved into nearby Lynchburg or Madison Heights. Their children attend several different public schools in the area.

Others in this age range live outside the community, out of state, and in distant countries. Several Monacans come from Maryland to participate in tribal meetings on a regular basis, and two sit on the Tribal Council.



Figure 42. George Whitewolf, Pam Talbott, and Sally Sturgill (all seated) at Homecoming, 2009. Photo: Bill Johns.

Young People

Monacan youth and young adults report little to no personal experience with incidents of racism. They are typically proud of their heritage, and many are interested in learning about Native cultures and traditions. Some have become powwow dancers, and some participate in other tribes' powwows as well as their own. Several of the youth are active in the tribe's Culture Class, learning to make their own powwow regalia and other crafts, while others attend sporadically.

Some youth and young adults help with organizing tribal activities, particularly the Annual Powwow, and others attend tribal membership meetings, occasionally even serving on the Tribal Council. They also participate in school and community functions. Few Monacans today find Monacan marriage partners, in contrast to previous generations in Amherst, in which marriage almost always occurred within the group. The past generation, as well as the present, have partnered with white or black individuals from the surrounding community. Many are legally married, while some younger members are not. Many have registered their children as tribal members.

Young people who live outside the Monacan community in Amherst generally express less knowledge about and interest in Indian heritage than those who live in or near Amherst, having had little exposure to the community or to intertribal American Indian events. They attend public schools and live in integrated neighborhoods.



Figure 43. Chaytan “Cash Man” Branham dances at the Homecoming, 2009. Photo: Bill Johns.



Figure 44. Bradley Branham at the Scholarship Auction, 2009. Author photo.

Family Connections

Beliefs about family connections remain deeply entrenched, especially among the Monacans who still live near Bear Mountain. Elderly Monacans stress the importance of reliance on family members to ensure that everyone can get by. Grandparents or aunts and uncles often raise children when parents are unable, and multiple generations often live in the same house or very close by. Other family members take in children when the need arises. In this community, Monacan children are rarely taken into foster care or put up for adoption through state or local intervention.

Family members continue to support one another through economic difficulties, health issues, and in the rare instances when a family member is imprisoned. Aunts and uncles step in when grandparents or parents cannot. When a person dies, or “walks on,” as they say, much of the Monacan community turns out for the funeral, which is generally held at a church, sometimes at St. Paul’s with burial in the newer Monacan cemetery on Father Judge Road.

Marriage Practices

Until school desegregation occurred in Amherst in 1963, and for some time after, Monacans at the mission remained isolated as a group, shunned by those outside their community, both black and white. For this reason, most of the tribal members who attended the mission school, and who are elders today, married other Monacans within the community. Almost all marriages within the mission community were endogamous. One woman who is now among the mid-life generation said, laughing, “We had to

memorize the names of our cousins and recite them, like a poem. So we'd know who we couldn't date."

Tribal members whose families moved out of state to escape Virginia's racist laws and repressive social system did not experience the stigma of being part of the mission community, and they were freer to marry as they chose. Few endogamous marriages took place among these tribal members. Now that social attitudes toward Monacan people in Amherst have widely changed, tribal members are also free to choose a non-Monacan partner, and almost all marriages are exogamous.

Identity and Communicative Practices

Communication between tribal and family members is now almost indistinguishable from that observed in the surrounding non-Native community, in terms of word choices and regional dialect. The "accent" associated with elderly Monacans is similar to other rural residents of Amherst County. Youth, however, speak with a more standardized "American" accent, perhaps due to mass media and web access for Monacans, almost all of whom attend public schools.

In everyday conversation, subjects are also typical: work, family, relationships, social activities, hobbies. The topics of tribal identity, culture, and language surface most often between tribal members at events where multiple tribal members are present, such as Council and Tribal meetings, Homecoming, and the Powwow. At these events, Monacans are likely to talk about oral traditions, particularly the repressive aura of the twentieth century, including the experiences of those who attended school during

desegregation and references to Walter Plecker, whose name elicits intense negative reactions from all tribal members, and These conversations often reverberate with themes of victimization, racist incidents with neighboring non-Indians, and pride in the group's survival and eventual emergence from social targeting. Occasionally, someone experiences a contemporary incident of prejudice, and these are always discussed in detail. Shared history is often retold at these events, and specific ancestors are mentioned, especially Will Johns, who is ranked as a hero for providing a land base for the tribal community, and Harry Branham, an early leader of the mission community. Genealogy discussions abound, as tribal members affirm their relationships to one another and discuss the histories of their elders and the connections between them.

Although everyone speaks English at these events, anyone who can speak even a bit of an Indian language is accorded high esteem. George Whitewolf was regularly asked to pray at tribal gatherings, because he was considered a spiritual person and he prayed in the Lakota language. At other gatherings, particularly those involving the general public, I have been asked to say a prayer in Tutelo. I suggest, therefore, that the tribal community has experienced a reversal in terms of language preference: in contexts that are both spiritual and tribal, Monacans assign more prestige to American Indian languages in general and to Siouan languages in particular. In contexts that are both spiritual and public, however, many Monacans prefer Tutelo, Lakota, and English in that order.

Similarly, whereas in the past it was considered dangerous to assert an Indian identity, and light skin was preferred to dark because of racism and segregation, it has now become popular among Monacans to assert an Indian identity with pride, at least among enrolled tribal members, and to "look" Indian. Sometimes "darker" people are

asked to attend public or political functions, such as federal recognition hearings, in order to “prove” that Monacans are Indians. Many tribal members wear “Indian” clothing, with prominent American Indian designs or traditional materials, such as beadwork and leather fringe. Some tribal members dye their hair black or darker brown than their natural color, and many wear “Indian” jewelry, including styles associated with Plains or Southwestern tribes. A few sport more radical identity markers, such as a “mohawk” hairstyle or facial tattoos. At the Scholarship Auction, held during Homecoming, items associated with American Indians are in demand and generally bring high prices, including items that are mass-produced in Asia, such as Indian dolls and ceramics. It seems important to many Monacans to establish an American Indian identity in every context: at public events, at tribal functions, and even within their own homes.

Monacans who attend Christian churches regularly and who consider themselves religious are somewhat less likely to express interest in American Indian languages as identity markers. Although it appears that some Monacans still spoke their ancestral language or a creolized version of it in the early twentieth century, the continued necessity of interacting with white landlords, the racism in the larger community, and the emergence of St. Paul’s church and mission evidently provided enough pressure that elderly Monacans stopped teaching the language to the next generation.

St. Paul’s Church

St. Paul’s Church originated with seminary student Arthur Gray, who came to the Monacan community in 1908. He encouraged the Monacans to build a church and was

pleased with their enthusiastic support. In 1914, Reverend Lewis, who had succeeded Gray, wrote to the Diocese requesting a second mission worker for the Indian community of 450 people. Soon afterwards, Sweet Briar College built a small home adjacent to the church for the mission workers, who had previously lived in a log house down the road. In 1930 a fire destroyed the church and the parsonage, and both were rebuilt the following year. At that time, 46 children were enrolled in the school and 200 people participated in mission activities. Additional small parcels of land were acquired over the years, and a playground was constructed in 1951.



Figure 45. St. Paul's Church, 2006. Author photo.

A generation ago, most of the Monacans who lived near St. Paul's Church attended that church only, sent their children to school at the mission, and attended its

social events, especially the annual July 4 picnic and the Christmas celebration, held on site. This pattern had persisted since the church was built. Before the Racial Integrity Act, as many as 500 Monacans lived in the community, dwindling to about 250 after World War II. Today, the regular attendees of St. Paul's Church number less than 20. The Episcopal Diocese provided mission workers until the school closed in 1963, and it provided ministers from 1908 until a few years ago, when B. Lloyd, who had succeeded John Haraughty, retired. In recent times, services were conducted by Phyllis Hicks, a Monacan woman who became ordained and who recently walked on, and now by Sharon Bryant, the current chief, who is studying for ordination. Phyllis worked with Episcopal officials who were interested in incorporating Native religious traditions into Episcopal practices, and Sharon has attended several conferences out of state.

In 1995 the Episcopal Diocese made history in Virginia by returning to the Monacan tribe 7.5 acres of land, on which sit the old log cabin school (which is now on the National Register of Historic Places), the newer school building that now serves as a tribal museum, and the two-story parish hall that now serves as the Tribal Center, as well as the field above the church, which includes a dormitory-style cabin and a ball field. The Diocese retained only a quarter-acre triangle of land including the church and the small mission worker's home, where a Monacan couple lives and helps to maintain the property. No other entity, religious or otherwise, has ever returned land to an Indian tribe in Virginia. Other tribes have had to buy back their own schools, even though the tribes had helped to build and furnish the schools themselves.

For a few Monacan families, the church remains the center of their religious and social life. They organize fundraising events, primarily the annual Homecoming, and they

interact with officials in the Diocese and with other churches. Sometimes volunteer workers from other churches visit St. Paul's and perform service projects for the church and tribe. Monacans also attend Episcopal conferences in other parts of the country.

For the most part, the Monacan Nation now organizes social and charitable activities through the auspices of the tribe, rather than the church, perhaps because more people participate in tribal activities. Fundraising dinners, the tribal Food Bank, dances, and other activities have supplanted the church socials and charitable projects of past generations. Occasional meals are still served after church in the Tribal Center's social hall, but these have become fewer in recent years. The one remaining major activity tied to St. Paul's Church is the annual Homecoming festival and bazaar.

Homecoming

The Monacan Homecoming originated from efforts by St. Paul's minister, John Haraughty, to involve his wife in a project that would allow her to become more active with the women of the Indian community. She felt lonely, he said, and he suggested she call a meeting to ask the women what they thought of hosting a bazaar (Whitlock 2008:149). They agreed and began working immediately to produce quilts, canned goods, and baskets. In 1968 the first event was scheduled. There was no running water on site—water had to be pumped and carried in buckets. There was only a wood-burning stove for the cooking. The public came by the wagonload, Haraughty reported, and “bought everything that had a price tag on it.” The Monacan women were stunned. They had not believed that anyone would come to their bazaar.

St. Paul's Bazaar, as it was then called, continued to attract large crowds each year, and the money helped to sustain the church. Over the years, the women continued to sell crafts, canned and baked goods, and quilts, and the men helped with setting up the area. They eventually added a buffet dinner to the attractions, held in the large hall. Tribal women (and some men) contributed side dishes and desserts, while other women cooked hams and turkeys to share. When the tribe received the land from the Diocese, the name changed to the Monacan Homecoming, although the funds still go to St. Paul's Church. In the late 1990s, a friendly neighbor named R.G. Bryant offered to begin a Scholarship Fund for tribal youth, and he and Roy Johns, then the assistant chief, held a barbecue and began collecting items to be sold at an auction during the Homecoming. This event proved lucrative and popular, and several Monacans worked together to gather items and to record purchases during the auction. Monacan young people, dressed in regalia, began demonstrating powwow dances for the public. During the Homecoming's best years, the church and Scholarship Fund have each made more than \$4,000.



Figure 46. Crowd gathers for Scholarship Auction at the Monacan Homecoming, 2009. Author photo.



Figure 47. Monacan elder "Uncle Eddie" joins a Friendship Dance at the Homecoming. Photo: Bill Johns.



Figure 48. Buffet dinner at Homecoming, 2006. Photo: Bill Johns.



Figure 49. Thelma Branham at Monacan Homecoming, 2003. Photo by Bobbie Whitehead.

The Women's Circle

For thousands of years, Indian women worked together while men hunted or made war—they gathered wild foods and medicines, planted fields and harvested crops, and made baskets and pottery. Monacan women continue this tradition today. Although they no longer work in the fields, they enjoy coming together to make apple butter before each year's Homecoming, and occasionally working on craft or sewing projects. In the 1920s, mission worker Ella Pier reported that the Women's Society met once a week to sew together. The Monacan Women's Circle grew out of this tradition.

Organized by Diane Johns Shields, who worked at the Monacan Tribal Office in the late 1990s, the Women's Circle came together as a way of providing emotional support and camaraderie to tribal women. It offered a sewing class and organized jelly-making sessions. It joined the Lynchburg Food Bank and began to operate a tribal food bank for those in need. It created Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners for elders and for needy families. It also applied for grants, which I wrote, to produce a second edition of a tribal cookbook and to operate a cottage industry producing and selling jelly and jelly gift baskets. These projects were successful. Through them we learned that the women were less interested in making money and being in business than they were in spending time together.

In recent years, Sharon Bryant has assumed leadership of the Women's Circle. Several women have worked to obtain Christmas sponsorships for Monacan children in need of gifts. They have conducted bake sales and sponsored dinners. They continue to organize social, charitable, and fundraising activities.

Monacan Card Game

One of the most unusual Monacan traditions is a card game of unknown origins, which does not appear to be played by people outside the Monacan community. The game is called “100 Pedro” (pronounced PEE-droh). It shares a few elements with bridge, such as bidding and trumps. It is usually played as a tournament among groups of players, although such occasions rarely occur now, and few young people know how to play the game.

According to former Monacan chief Kenneth Branham, the game is played by groups of four, with two sets of partners facing one another. The bidder chooses a suit for the trump and is required to bid 40 points on the hand. If the player to the bidder’s left is not dealt a king, he or she can pass. If a king is dealt, the player must bid, whether or not he or she has a winning hand. A player who wins a bid must lead with a king on the first play in the trump suit. On the next play, the bidder can lead with any card. If another player plays a card with higher point value, he or she wins the lead on the next play. The first team to reach 100 points wins.

Points are counted with king trump at 25 points, the nine at 9 points, and joker at 2 points. The joker is wild and counts in any trump suit. The ace, ten, jack, and two count 1 point each in trump. The five counts 5 points and can be played as a trump card in any suit called trump. The queen, one, three, four, six, seven, and eight get no points. The called trump in those cards can save a bidder when it is smarter to save a counting card for later (Whitlock 2008).

Because the game is not played by outsiders, the 100 Pedro tournaments have served an important social function, bringing community members together to enjoy the game, sharing food, and conversation. It serves as a marker of Monacan identity among community members who are middle aged and older, and it adds another element to Monacans' perception of themselves as separate from the surrounding community.

Culture Class and Drum Group

In the late 1990s, the Monacan Nation formed its own drum group, called "Muddy Creek," and began to hold culture classes for young people. Led by Danny Red Elk Gear, a Monacan who had grown up in Maryland and moved to Amherst as an adult, the drum group consisted of four men and boys. They performed at the powwow, at other dance events and ceremonial occasions. The drum group continued for several years.



Figure 50. Drum group, 2003. Author photo.

Danny also began leading the culture classes with Sue Elliott, helping Monacan youth learn to dance and to make their regalia, which is a time-consuming process. A number of young dancers participated, and some of these Monacans still dance at powwows. After several years, the classes were discontinued. They resumed in recent years under the tutelage of George Whitewolf, then the assistant chief, whom the children called “Papa George.” Again, classes focused on regalia-making and dance styles, but the children and youth also learned some Lakota words. Classes were sometimes held for as long as five hours on Saturdays during fall and winter. Now that George has walked on, they are continuing under the leadership of Matt Latimer, a Tribal Council Member who worked with and studied with George for several years before his death.

The Monacan youth also formed a dance group, called “Bear Mountain Dancers.” They hold fundraisers and participate in other powwows throughout the state. Several Monacan youth have gone on to dance at powwows throughout the country and have won prizes in their categories.



Figure 51. Quinton Talbott, shown here in 2007, became a national dance champion. Photo by Bill Johns.

Annual Powwow

The Monacan Tribe held its first powwow in 1992, at the Sedalia Community Center, an abandoned school building in Bedford County. Organized by tribal member George Whitewolf, it drew several thousand attendees. As with the Homecoming generations before, the Monacan people were stunned by the crowds. They had not expected so many people to be interested in their history and culture.

The Annual Powwow has continued uninterrupted for 22 years and is now held in Amherst County, on a farm in the tiny town of Elon. A Powwow Committee does the

planning, arranging for vendors, as well as the Master of Ceremonies and Arena Director. Numerous volunteers are required to coordinate logistics, operate the admissions gate and tribal hot dog booth, empty trash, and coordinate the Saturday evening dinner for the many dancers who participate. For the past fifteen years, I have helped, too, either with the admissions or tribal T-shirt booth, or participated as a dancer. I also sometimes accompany a group of Monacans who inspect each vendor's booth to ensure that they are not selling mass-produced or imitation items, such as dream-catchers with plastic beads, plastic headdresses with dyed feathers, and many similar items banned by the tribe's vendor contract, and I help to serve the Saturday evening dinner provided by the tribal women to the dancers and vendors..

The Monacan Powwow is like many others across the state and beyond. It is not a contest powwow, in which individual dancers compete by category for a cash prize, but operates on "day money" instead, where the first dancers to register are assured of making \$100 for two days. In past years, the powwow has featured live buffalo, wolves, and birds of prey, along with experienced handlers who explain these animals' habits and their historical and spiritual importance to American Indian people. Storytellers have performed during some years. There is also a family of Aztec dancers who demonstrate their dances twice a day.

The tribe spends about \$20,000 to produce the powwow. The highest costs include advertising, "day money" for dancers, fees for invited drum groups and the specialty Aztec dancers, and motel rooms for contracted participants. When the weather has been good, the tribe has made up to \$40,000 over three days: the Friday Students' Day, which schoolchildren attend on field trips, and the Saturday and Sunday regular

days. Saturday night features a bonfire with dancing, always popular with attendees. If it rains one day, the tribe can make only a little profit, and if it rains both days, no profit will be made. This is the singular fund-raising event through which the tribe pays its bills each year: electricity and heating for the buildings, phone for the offices, maintenance for the tribal van, and many other costs. A successful powwow means a good year for the tribe and the community. A year of low profit has meant that the tribe had to borrow money from its own Scholarship Fund.

Powwows are held across the country by tribes and by various other organizations. The event itself developed as a Plains tradition, although “pau wau” is an Algonquian word denoting a spiritual leader. These events are now held as a way of promoting Native culture and raising money. Some have argued that the adoption of powwows by tribes who did not traditionally practice them is a pan-Indian form of cultural appropriation. Cook, Johns and I (2005) have suggested that, for Monacan people, the powwow is a public assertion of their Indian identity and is not merely cultural appropriation but is instead a powerful counterpoint to the discrimination and invisibility they experienced during most of the twentieth century. Many Monacans do not attend other powwows and do not wear regalia; nevertheless, they attend their own tribal event each year to show support and pride in their heritage. At the powwow, Monacans show up who do not participate in tribal meetings or any other events. Like Homecoming, the powwow is a reunion of family members, but it is also a reunion of the many Native people from Virginia and beyond who see one another only at these events. It also provides opportunities to educate the public about Native peoples and is a strong statement of tribal continuity.



Figure 52. Powwow Grand Entry, 2005, with Daniel Gear in front. Photo: Bill Johns.



Figure 53. Dancers at the Monacan Powwow, 2011. Photo by Bill Johns.

Membership and Enrollment Criteria

Until the 1980s, membership in the Monacan tribe was an informal affair, consisting of tacit acknowledgement, within the community, of one's genealogical relationship to the group. This was true for those whose families had left the community as well as those who remained. However, as time passed it became more and more difficult to ascertain those connections, because those whose families had moved away typically married non-Monacans, and descendants are now often several generations removed. When Phyllis Hicks was hired, through M-P-M funds, as the tribe's Community Service Coordinator, she became the first membership registrar as well, issuing tribal cards to those who applied for them. Peter Houck's book, *Indian Island*, lists the genealogies of Monacan families in an appendix, based on research that Houck conducted while serving as a pediatrician in Lynchburg and working with Monacan families. The genealogical history was refined by Diane Johns Shields when she succeeded Phyllis as Coordinator. Diane entered the genealogies into a computer program and a group of community members dating back to the mid-1700s was identified. Those names and dates now constitute the "original rolls."

Today, tribal membership is determined by a Tribal Enrollment Committee and Coordinator, who review applications according to an established list of acceptable documentation and then submit individual applications to the tribal membership for a vote. Potential enrollees must fill out an application for membership and submit it, along with evidence documenting descent from any of the Monacan individuals listed on the "original rolls." Acceptable evidence includes birth certificates and other official documents. In the past, the tribe also accepted affidavits and family records, such as

Bible entries. A fee is required, which covers the time spent in review plus the cost of producing and laminating a membership card. Monacans receive a tribal number that enables them to vote, and each is made a member for life. Members may also enroll their own children. A spouse may receive a “spouse card” but may not vote.

In recent years, the security of tribal records has become a concern, and the tribe now restricts access to the tribal office, where records are kept in a locked cabinet.

Tribal and Council Meetings

The Monacan tribe is incorporated as a nonprofit 501(c) 3 organization in Virginia and was acknowledged as a tribe by the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1989. Several years later, it changed its legal name to the Monacan Indian Nation, Inc., an action that some members felt was important in order to assert the group’s inherent sovereignty. It operates under its own set of Bylaws and holds tribal membership meetings five or six times each year. A Tribal Council, consisting of members elected for terms of four years, meets in alternate months to review tribal business matters. Currently twelve members sit on that Council. I held a Council seat for 12 years, vacated for a year, and have now returned to sit on the Council.

The Tribal Council reviews issues concerning building maintenance, budget, tribal activities, requests from organizations for speakers or advisors, and many other topics. It is not empowered to act on matters of consequence or significant expense but must bring these to the tribe for a vote.

Tribal membership meetings are attended primarily by tribal members and their immediate family members, some of whom are not Monacan. Occasionally a guest will also attend, to address the tribe on a particular topic. On some occasions, such as the Annual Meeting in June, a meal will precede the meeting. Women contribute potluck dishes, and fried chicken is usually purchased from a nearby vendor. Meetings take anywhere from one to four hours, depending on the complexity of issues being addressed and the number of people who wish to speak.

Many people within the tribe remain deeply committed to an American Indian identity, to the land around Bear Mountain, and to the shared history they learned from their parents and grandparents. That commitment motivates them to volunteer their time and energy to produce events such as the Powwow, to assume positions on the Tribal Council, and to envision new ideas that will help to maintain or improve the tribal community at the Bear Mountain mission.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ANCESTRAL LANGUAGE PREFERENCES BASED ON FIELD WORK

In this chapter I report on the results of the study I conducted among Monacan people and the competing language ideologies that have emerged within the tribe. Monacan people are very much aware of their unique linguistic and cultural heritage, even though they are monolingual English speakers today and sometimes interact more frequently with non-Native people than with other tribal members. They use their heritage to distinguish themselves not only from non-Natives—whom they consider “others”—but also from other state-recognized Indian tribes within Virginia, whose linguistic heritage is Algonquian.

As a marker of group identity, the Tutelo language continues to have meaning for many Monacan people, even though this ancestral language has not been spoken in Canada for about half a century and would have differed to an unknown extent from the dialect spoken by historical Monacan people. The Monacans identify with Tutelo descendants in Brantford, Ontario, and also with other Siouan-speaking peoples throughout the country, especially the Sioux nations of the Plains.

A few Monacans who identify with Plains cultural traditions and with the Lakota language in particular, have studied Lakota so that they can offer prayers in that language at Monacan tribal gatherings. These Monacans base their identification with Lakota on a sense of shared linguistic heritage—a connection several thousand years old. Through

those connections, the language ghost manifests itself as a residual fragment of the distant past that remains unresolved.

During the past 400 years, Monacan resistance has been perpetuated through resilient social structures made possible and even necessary by the lingering evocations of collective memories involving a shared and sacred history. As Cole noted,

Remembering is constituted by the particular discourses of which it is a part, and it is always occasioned by, and subordinated to, the socially constituted needs and struggles of individuals and the social discourses through which they are expressed (2001:25).

Tribal members see themselves as survivors of a history of violent trauma and persecution, which is part of their sacred past, in ways somewhat similar to the descendants of the Israelites, whose ancestors suffered and ensured the group's continuity through sacrifice. The story Monacans tell about their grandparents' experiences links the group members and excludes those whose forebears did not experience the same degree of suffering.

One identifiable aspect of Monacan social discourse has to do with genealogical identity and kinship. At the two annual gatherings that Monacan people host, the Annual Powwow in May, and the St. Paul's Homecoming in October, people who now live in different areas often encounter one another, and they immediately engage in an introduction based on relationship, such as "I'm Jim Branham, son of _____ and _____ Branham. My grandparents were _____ and _____." The other speaker responds, sharing similar information. This exchange establishes the familial connection

through which the two speakers relate as Monacan tribal members. The exchange occurs regardless of age, gender, or any particular beliefs concerning culture or language.

The exchange of genealogical information rests on the assumption of kinship founded on a biological relationship, which has been construed by social scientists to imply a kind of essentialism, as Garrouette has noted, conceived as a “blood” connection, which can perhaps be attenuated and ultimately exhausted (2003:123). In the Monacan case, the closeness of the bond is determined by the number of generations necessary to reach one in which the other speaker recognizes a relative, so the conversation generally continues until the two speakers either arrive at the connection between them or determine from which branch of the collective family tree each descends.

Language Preference Groups and Responses

Responses in the study I conducted tended to fall into three broadly imagined groups in terms of people’s relationships to language and ancestral language preference. This section describes those three groups and details the responses of the Monacan people with whom I spoke.

While all members share English as their first language, many tribal members feel an affiliation with the Tutelo language and a poignant desire to be able to speak at least some of that language. A second group affiliates itself with the Lakota language, and some members of this group have studied that language in order to be able to use it in specific contexts. Others feel no particular need to recover the language in any aspect. While gender does not appear to be a distinguishing factor, age is, and so are religious

practices. There do not appear to be any correlations between place of residence and language preference regarding revitalization.

The English-preference group is divided into two subgroups. One is the group of younger members for whom Indian culture in general, and Monacan culture in particular, has little meaning, although Monacan identity remains significant. Their parents do not practice “Indian” traditions, and for the most part they live in the larger society and are barely distinguishable as Monacans. Some of these younger people report having no specific religious affiliation, and they do not engage in praying in any language, ancestral or otherwise. “What’s the point?” one young man said. “We can’t go back to living the old ways anyways, so why would we wanna speak some old Indian language?” Several members of this group believe that prayer is important but that speaking prayers in English is more appropriate than in an ancestral language because “we never learned that other way.” A few of these Monacan young people participate in dancing at tribal powwows, but this is the only Indian “tradition” they practice. They dance because other Monacans dance, because it connects them to their tribal family and to other young people of American Indian descent, but not because of its association with Monacan history. They are interested in American Indian language in general because of its value as an identity marker and because they consider it “cool.”

The other English-preference group is older, generally above the age of 65, and is affiliated with St. Paul’s Episcopal Church. They express no connection to Indian traditions and uniformly report that no such traditions were practiced in their homes as they grew up. “No. I never heard none of them speaking any Indian,” said one woman in reference to her grandparents. “It was all just gone, see. We didn’t do none of that.”

Another church member expressed the idea that Indian languages are vestiges of “savage” behavior, suggesting that the old ways implied ignorance and a lack of understanding of more civilized Christian ways. This belief is reminiscent of the early missionaries’ attitudes toward any practice that appeared to be “heathen.”

The Lakota-preference group now consists of only a few tribal members, all of whom had a close relationship with George Whitewolf and accepted him as a spiritual teacher during the latter years of his life. George believed that Tutelo was “a dead language,” because nobody spoke it, and he clearly articulated his conviction that a language needs to be spoken between communicants in order to qualify as language. “I speak Lakota because I want to be able to talk Indian with other people, and there’s plenty of people who speak it out West,” he said. “They’re our relatives. Who wants to talk in a language that’s not alive anymore?” Interestingly, all of the Lakota-preference tribal members identified a performative context as a reason for speaking the language, in addition to praying. They want to be able to conduct ceremonies, to pray in public, to sing “real Indian” songs, as well as to speak with other Lakota speakers. George claimed to speak Lakota fluently, and no one was conversant enough in Lakota to dispute his claim, but his followers do not claim to speak Lakota fluently. Their efforts to speak the language seem limited to a few lines of prayer at the beginning of public events.

The Tutelo-preference group is more complicated. Most of these tribal members are middle aged or elders, although one is only 18. They identify the recovery of Monacan traditions as important, and they distinguish between Monacan and other intertribal practices, saying that Monacans should “learn their own ways.” All of the Tutelo adherents pray. They specifically identified ancestors as one of the groups to

whom they would address prayers in Tutelo if they were able. Several members said they would like to be able to speak the language because “it’s the language of this place” or something similar. All of them reported that they want to be able to use their ancestral language in prayers.

In addition to these groups were smaller groups that also merit attention. A few people said they wanted to be able to speak Tutelo in order to be able to use it in performative contexts, such as intertribal gatherings where other Native people speak in their language; in this case, being able to speak Tutelo seems to confer validation that the speaker is indeed Monacan. One member also wanted to be able to perform in either Tutelo or Lakota, not indicating a preference for either one. This person does not engage in praying. All three of these have been members of the tribal council, so perhaps there is a perceived correlation between speaking the ancestral language in public and leadership in the Monacan tribe, again the idea of validation or authenticity.

One final person participated in the study who was not Monacan and had no affiliation with the Tutelo language. This is a man who is a member of the Oglala Lakota tribe at Pine Ridge, South Dakota. He lived in Virginia for many years and is a powwow dancer. He had periodic contact with George Whitewolf and with others who identified as Indian, who were not Lakota but who attempted to speak the Lakota language or who appropriated Lakota traditions. This man voiced clear objections to the use of Lakota language by non-Lakota people. “I told him, ‘get my tongue out of your mouth,’” he said, referring to Whitewolf. “But he didn’t. He was that kind of guy.” According to him, language and identity are tied together in sacred places, and for a Lakota to be able to understand his ancestors and his world in a cosmological sense, he needs to be able to

pray in Lakota. “Let me ask you this,” he said. “If you’re gonna talk to your Monacan ancestors, what language will they be speaking? Not Lakota, right?”

Two of the tribal members shared information that was particularly surprising. One noted that his grandfather, who had moved away from the Bear Mountain community, had been known to say their family Sunday supper prayer in another language, but that no one had ever asked him what he was saying. “You just didn’t question the father back then,” he said. He believes today that his grandfather was speaking the ancestral language, back in the 1950s. There was likely a small community of Monacan language speakers in the Bear Mountain settlement area not long before, considering the remarks of another elderly man, noted previously, about his own grandfather in the 1920s: “he could speak ‘em [Indian words] just like those Indians from down in North Carolina [presumably the Cherokees],” (Cook 111). This idea was supported by Bushnell who noted of the Monacans in 1914, “Their language contains many Indian words.”

Another Monacan, an elderly man, recalled that he had learned Indian words as a child. He no longer remembers where he learned them or from whom. “I go someplace, by myself, and I say ‘em,” he stated. “I say those words to myself.” When urged to relate some of the words, he dropped his eyes. “No, them’s secret words. You can’t be talking that way.”

Religious Practices

As noted earlier, there is a high correlation between language preference and religious practices. In this section I examine the correlation between English preference and the practice of Christianity through St. Paul's Episcopal Church, as opposed to the practice of Native spiritual traditions and a preference for Native language, either Tutelo or Lakota.

Most of the people who attend St. Paul's Church on a regular basis and who consider themselves devout Christian worshipers do not express a preference for an ancestral Indian language to augment their English. As English-speaking churches were established among American Indian populations, the first tasks of missionaries were often to translate the Bible into the Native language and to establish English-speaking schools. In the Monacan case, it does not appear that a Bible translation took place; therefore, the shift to English was likely already occurring due to sustained contact, over generations, with neighboring non-Natives through farming and other necessarily interactive practices. Once the school at Bear Mountain was established, the speaking of Native languages would have been either forbidden or strongly discouraged. As a rule, American Indian children were told that they must speak only English and worship God according to Christian traditions in order to become good American citizens and Christians. The establishment of St. Paul's mission in 1908 probably coincided with the disappearance of the ancestral Monacan language, such that only a few fluent elderly speakers remained by the 1940s, and one or two remained by the 1950s. The experience of Tutelo speakers in Canada was similar. In Amherst, repressive policies during the first half of the twentieth century, along with the racism expressed by local whites, would have combined to suppress further speaking of the language. As the elderly Monacan man noted some years

ago, “If you will join me—people didn’t want to be learned to speak Indian. They...wanted to do it a different way.”

Recently, tribal members have begun to use the Tutelo language in the context of reburial ceremonies that re-inter the remains of ancestral Monacans, claimed by the tribe from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and other facilities. Some members, in this context, have used the language in prayers and in songs recovered from Speck’s documentation of the Tutelo Spirit Adoption Ceremony (1942). The tribe was guided in this endeavor by Lawrence Dunmore of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation in North Carolina, a related tribe, who worked for many years from a non-academic orientation to revive the Tutelo language. It is clearly important to Monacan people to conduct these rituals in the language of the ancestors, although it is not clear precisely how they understand this: whether most view the use of a Native language as necessary to communicate with the ancestors in a spiritual sense or, more practically, as a convention of politeness. Nevertheless, when the language first began to be heard in prayers and songs, several elders who attended the ceremonies wept. They felt joyous, they said, at hearing their own language for the first time, and they believed their ancestors were able to recognize them audibly.

Language preference differs among Monacan people who attend St. Paul’s Church only occasionally. A number of people in this group have attended the reburial ceremonies at Bear Mountain and express a desire to hear the language in ceremonial contexts, songs, and prayer. They believe that their ancestors welcome their use of the language and that they need it to communicate effectively with those from the distant past as well as with more recent ancestors. Some of the human remains involved in the

reburial ceremonies were 900 years old, but the question of whether those ancestors would have spoken Tutelo, in the same way the language was documented by Hale and Speck, and revived by Lawrence Dunmore, never arose.

In recent years, Monacan people have begun to participate in pan-Indian religious rituals. George Whitewolf erected a sweat lodge at Bear Mountain and held occasional “sweats” for tribal members and outsiders as well. A number of Monacans have participated in these ceremonies. Whitewolf also conducted “vision quests” on Bear Mountain for certain individuals who wanted access to spiritual insight. All of those who participated in these two types of events identify with American Indian culture and language traditions. Interestingly, the Lakota and Tutelo adherents have participated together in the ceremonies, which were conducted in Lakota and English, never in Tutelo because no Monacan speaks enough of that language to express fluency in a ritual context. Language preference has not become contentious in these settings, perhaps because the ceremony stresses spirituality and interrelatedness between participants. Both Lakota and Tutelo preferences can be viewed as markers of Monacan (or American Indian) identity, but those who adhere to the Tutelo preference express the need for linguistic specificity in relation to history and genealogical connections.

Language preference is also characterized by marked difference in terms of acquisition and performance context. While the right to learn the Tutelo language is thought by Tutelo adherents to be the birthright of Monacan people, inherited along with shared history and genealogy even though it is no longer spoken, the perceived authenticity of Lakota speakers, for Monacan Lakota adherents, is based on acquisition from an authentic cultural practitioner. In other words, Tutelo can be reconstructed by

studying documented language material collected from former speakers and then learned by Monacan speakers, because of its historical relation to Monacan people, but Lakota can only be acquired from “out West,” by studying with a Lakota language speaker judged to be culturally authentic or with a spiritual leader such as George Whitewolf, who himself learned from such a practitioner. There are no Monacans who claim to have learned Lakota from a book or class setting.

Additionally, Tutelo adherents refer repeatedly to a connection between land and language that is spiritual and historical in nature, while Lakota adherents prefer a practical connection to other Lakota speakers that could be termed spiritual but only distantly historical. Tutelo adherents want the language revitalized so that they can pray in both private and public contexts, but Lakota adherents want to use that language primarily in performative, public situations. There is an element of authenticity in terms of American Indian identity attached to both languages; Lakota, however, is intended for effect on other people, while the validity attached to Tutelo is conveyed both publicly and privately.

One other factor emerged during the course of the study: the number of Monacan people who regularly pray seems considerably larger than the number in the general non-Native population, although I have not drawn statistical comparisons. Only a few people claim not to pray at all, in any language. Church-going members pray regularly, both in church services and outside, during the course of their day. Other Monacans, who consider themselves Christian but who attend church irregularly or not at all, also engage in prayer on a regular basis. Both of these groups pray specifically to God or to the

Creator, imagined similarly, although the word “Creator” seems to have a more Native connotation when Monacans use it in prayer.

Those who do not profess to be Christians also pray, sometimes in the context of American Indian rituals but more often when alone or in a small group. Sometimes they engage in the practice of “smudging,” using sage and/or tobacco smoke as a conduit for the prayers and as a means of purifying themselves and their intentions. They address the Creator, called Tunkasila (“grandfather”) by the Lakota adherents, and also ancestors as a group, plus elements of the natural world specific to the Bear Mountain area.

Thus, although the rituals specific to Monacan culture in Virginia are no longer practiced, and although the language itself is no longer used, Monacan people retain a sense of the spiritual as being important to their lives and their identities. Having lost the beautiful Tutelo rituals documented by Speck and Kurath, they remain deeply religious people. In recent years, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, taking guidance from the larger Episcopal diocese, has begun incorporating some Native traditions into its worship services, using elements such as the pipe and the drum. Two Monacan women have received training as Episcopal ministers, and one has been ordained. With the loss of George Whitewolf as a spiritual advisor to some of the youth and a few of the adults, the future of Monacan religious traditions seems unclear. Perhaps the tribe will be drawn closer to the church as a result of its own people serving as spiritual leaders in that context. Perhaps another spiritual leader will emerge within a more “traditional” Native context. In the meantime, the few people who reported not engaging in prayer belong to the younger group. Whether this is a concern among the older members also remains to be seen.

Age as a Factor in Language Attitudes

One other variable emerged from Monacans as a factor affecting language preference: the age of the respondent. Respondents above the age of 60 were most likely to be either Tutelo adherents who did not attend church regularly, or regular church attendees who believed they should speak only English. Here I consider the age of the people with whom I spoke and their attitudes as they expressed them.

Middle-aged Monacans, age 40 to 60, expressed the greatest variability in their responses, with more than half expressing preference for Tutelo, and the remainder giving responses that varied across the entire spectrum. This age group tended to include occasional church attendees, tribal council members, and local residents. This group is also the most active in terms of participating in and organizing tribal events. Most have grown children, many have full-time jobs, but they typically indicate that the tribe has assumed greater importance in their lives than when they were younger, and they want to create a legacy for generations to come.

The youngest Monacans in the study, age 18 to 35, are least likely to be interested in an ancestral language. Unlike the people in Nancy Dorian's study of Gaelic-speaking fisherfolk in East Sutherland, younger Monacan members do not berate their elders for not choosing to transmit their language and allowing it to die. This is a common occurrence among cultural groups whose languages are stigmatized and whose members shift to languages that enjoy more local prestige—so common, Dorian notes, that this recurrent response to ancestral-language loss has become something of a cliché within immigrant-descended groups (Dorian 1993:577). Among Monacans, many people

articulate a sense of sadness that their language is no longer spoken, and they regret that previous generations were unable to keep it alive, but these are the middle-aged members, not the group aged 18 to 35. It may be, as one Monacan has noted, that “the younger people are thinking about their children and their work, they’re busy with their lives, you know. And it’s not till later that the tribe becomes important to them, and then they want to come back and be part of things.” If this is true, then younger Monacans would be expected to regret the loss of the ancestral language later in their lives. It is also true that the present generation of parents is not responsible for the language loss, and so they cannot be held accountable.

Another age group that figures into the issue of language preference is the children. During Whitewolf’s latter years, he led a culture class for Monacan youth, which met on winter Saturdays for as long as five hours. The children worked on dance regalia and crafts, and they listened to his stories and anecdotes. He also taught them Lakota words, which they were expected to memorize and recite. He reported with pride that some of the children were going to school and telling their teachers how to say words in “Indian.” With Whitewolf’s death, however, some adults have expressed concern about the children learning Lakota words rather than Tutelo. “It’s not ours,” said one man. “Why we wanna teach our kids a language that ain’t ours? Another respondent was vehemently opposed to teaching Lakota in this context: “They [The people teaching the children Lakota words] are making us look like idiots. Those kids going around talking Lakota, they’re just gonna laugh at us out West, say ‘look at those wannabes,’ why don’t they [Monacans] speak their own language?” On the other hand, some Monacan adults have no problem with teaching the children Indian words, no matter what language it is.

“My kids are Indian, they need to know they’re Indian, and I’m happy if they’re learning how to talk like an Indian. I never learned any of that,” one woman said.

Language and Place

Of those tribal members who mentioned a connection to place through ancestral language, all expressed a preference for Tutelo and noted specifically that language arises in specific locations.

“This is our place,” said one woman. “The Creator put us here, and we had our own ways, and our language. It was how we talked to the animals and the plants, that’s how they knew who we were. We used to understand them, and they spoke to us. So now we can’t. They don’t tell us things any more, that’s how much we’ve lost. Or maybe they tell us but we don’t understand. It’s like we’re cut off from understanding.”

Other Monacan people express similar ideas, that the natural world around Bear Mountain was “where we belong,” and that the original language would have been able to express Monacan values and traditions, stories, social expectations, and the “true history of our people, not what they put in them books.” There is an understanding, among Monacan people, that the voices of their ancestors have been lost, that the ancestors are not correctly represented in history and are unable to speak for themselves, partly because they were unable to write their own histories and partly because the language has shifted to the language of the colonizers.

Language and History

It was part of the agenda of colonialism, most Monacans believe, to erase what was Indian and replace it with Euro-American values and beliefs. In this sense, the loss of language is part of the greater loss of land, of traditions, and of identity experienced by Monacan elders. They express a sense of shame and also of victimization, of helplessness in the face of forces beyond American Indians' control. As the former Monacan chief noted about his grandmother, "She told me with tears in her eyes if the wrong person heard her talking or teaching us those ways, she might not have a place to live the next day." And the words of the Monacan elder continue to resonate, though he died several years ago: "I think a person, being stuck in this county—and they had no reading and writing at the time—and they was pushed down to dirt and dust. Just like the dirt we come from."

Monacan people's collective sense of trauma continues, although younger people do not reflect the same perceptions of persecution. However, those of middle age and older continue to recount the stories; for example, this response from a Monacan man:

That's all you heard, everywhere we went, or whatever we done, "oh, he's one of those issues." We couldn't work with white people, we couldn't be in schools with them, we couldn't associate with them, we couldn't eat [with them]. I think they just came up with the slang word "free issue." They had this hatred; they just had this ungodly hatred. They couldn't accept you as a human (Haimés-Bartolf 2008:389).

The pain felt by Monacan people who associate cultural and language loss with loss of identity is evident.

“You didn’t grow up here, you can’t know how it was for us. How we was treated like dogs, worse than dogs. Calling us Issues and all that, like we weren’t even human. No wonder they stopped speaking the language, doing things that would draw attention,” said a Monacan woman. “You have to feel for what our people been through.”

CHAPTER EIGHT

INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE AND CULTURALLY SPECIFIC

INTERLOCUTORS

In attempting to understand the way Monacan people have traditionally related to one another, to their environment, their language, and their sense of the past, nothing figures more prominently than the Native relationship to the land itself. For American Indians, the natural environment is a highly salient prism for both memory and tradition. In this chapter I analyze ideas about indigenous language and its role in the ancestral landscape, along with the relevant literature regarding domains and interlocutors we could consider to be culturally specific, and I consider the existence of a “language ghost” within the Monacan community.

According to many tribal traditions, the land has a sacred role that in turn contributes to the “peoplehood” of those who live in it. The notion of habituated landscape, conceptualized by Bachelard (1964), incorporates the similar assertion that landscapes are not merely constructed of the experiences and actions of people (and animals), but those people and other beings are themselves constructed in and dispersed through the landscape.

Douglas George-Kanentiio, a Mohawk, perhaps best explains the principles, echoed by numerous Native people, by which his people relate to the habituated landscape through language. One of the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois)

confederacy, the Mohawk interacted with the Tutelo people who relocated to what is now the Six Nations reserve in Brantford, Ontario. George-Kanentiio notes:

We are taught that native language, the Iroquois language, was developed and born in the land in which we find ourselves. We are taught that it is the language of the Earth. It is the language in which we communicate with the natural world. When our spiritual leaders...gather together...they have to speak very specific words of thanksgiving...We go through this in order to put our minds into a kind of collective spiritual state, and we have to do this in a native language, because we are told that is the means by which we can effectively communicate with the natural world. If we don't have that language, then we can no longer talk to the elements. We no longer can address the winds. We no longer can address the natural world, the animal species. If we fail to do that, if there is some time in our history when we lose that ability, then the balance is upset between humans and nature, and there will be an attendant and possibly a violent reaction...

One of the reasons that the Iroquois are greatly apprehensive about the loss of our language is that when...we die...we have to be greeted by our relatives, our ancestors, and if they can't speak to us, if they don't know our language, then we are going to be trapped between two worlds, and if that happens it is going to be a great despair for our people. [Smith 2006:83]

A similar ideology appears in the clearly articulated desire of Monacan people to conduct reburial ceremonies of their ancestors' remains in the Tutelo language; a number of tribal members have expressed a perception that the spirits of ancestors need to be

addressed in the words they can recognize, both as an expression of respect and as a practical convention, because those spirits did not speak English during their lifetimes.

Notions about the cultural effects of language loss and “salvage linguistics” among American Indians have been explored by numerous anthropologists since the late 1800s, but the recent literature on indigenous language revitalization is especially relevant. Most Native peoples feel profoundly tied to the land where they live, which is not perceived as a two-dimensional “landscape” but as an animate, interactive presence. Posey notes that it is the connection to the land, and the relationships arising from that connection, which constitute the core of indigenous peoples’ identity (2001:386).

These relationships are encoded, for each cultural group, in a specific Native language, through which it expresses its unique worldview. As language shift occurs, only a part of the whole repository of cultural knowledge is transferred to the new language. A people’s world view, Crystal notes, emerges gradually through an accumulation of sources: stories, traditions, and cultural and ecological knowledge, all of which is unified through language that links information and generations of community members together (2000:46).

The Tutelo people who left Virginia in the mid-eighteenth century lost that connection to a specific homeplace that, in George-Kanentiios’ view, was tied to the origin of their language. However, they retained the cultural and ecological understanding of that place through the oral transmission of stories that referenced it, up until their population was drastically reduced through disease. For the Monacans, on the other hand, connection to the land remains powerful, even among those whose families

left Virginia during the last century. Their orally transmitted canon of cultural and ecological knowledge, however, has suffered profoundly due to the shift that occurred from their ancestral language to English. That knowledge is to a great degree irrecoverable.

Participation and Perceptual Reciprocity

Typically, American Indian ideas about the natural world have been seen as being at odds with Western scientific thinking, both by scientists and by Natives. In this section I discuss some of the ideas Western civilization has considered that resemble Native ideas about situational reciprocity.

In the early development of Western philosophy, it was Aristotle who differentiated man from other animals by virtue of his possessing a rational soul, and he further insisted on a hierarchical ordering of the natural world. Abrams (1996) notes that in 1641 Descartes laid the groundwork for considering material reality a mechanical realm that could be purged of subjective experience. In contrast, most indigenous peoples see themselves as part of the natural world. The Cartesian dualism that separates mind from matter, so familiar to the Western worldview, is inconceivable to them.

There are ideas within some recent traditions of Western thought that resonate deeply with the perspectives of many indigenous peoples. Noting that anthropologists are of course aware that social life in all locations takes place through exchanges of symbolic forms, Basso suggests that one should expect to find numerous studies on the varieties of meaning ascribed by different cultural groups to the features of their natural

surroundings. However, he says, ethnographers have seldom focused on “the elaborate arrays of conceptual and expressive instruments—ideas, beliefs, stories, songs—with which community members produce and display coherent understandings” of that world. What is missing, he indicates, is a concern with sense of place, which he characterized as “the various and variable perspectives from which people know their landscapes” (Basso 1996:54).

The concept of dwelling, Basso notes, was developed by Heidegger (1977), who assigned importance to the ways in which people conceptualize geographical space. Dwelling consists of multiple lived relationships maintained with places, through which space acquires meaning for people. For this reason familiar places are experienced as meaningful, and “the physical landscape becomes wedded to the landscape of the mind” (Basso 1996:55), an idea reminiscent of Bachelard’s (1964) concept of habituated landscape.

These ideas find further articulation in David Abrams’ (1996) work, which describe the connection between human language and environmental awareness from a phenomenological perspective, through what he terms “perceptual reciprocity,” explained as the synaesthetic participation of the embodied, corporeal self with other-than-human entities. Abrams notes specifically that spoken language, in practice, has a different significance for many indigenous peoples than it does in Western society. Through prayer, song and story, language functions not only to create a dialogue with other human beings but also to communicate with the natural world, to renew reciprocity with powers of earth and sky, and to invoke kinship relationships with such other-than-human entities as animals and geographic features (Abrams 1996:70-71).

I have hypothesized that for many Monacan people, even today and despite the profound loss of cultural knowledge they have experienced, the natural world as perceived through their lived landscape is participatory, as it is for so many indigenous peoples. No matter how urban a place may appear, Monacans still perceive their surroundings to reflect an animate nature, modified but nevertheless alive. According to numerous indigenous groups, the dialectic of perception and place signifies “that they are not only in places but of them” (Casey 1996:19).

When we consider language and its role in a “landscape of the mind,” the effects of language loss for indigenous groups such as the Monacan, and its relation to the habituated landscape, become apparent. Saussure (1966) conceived of the structure of language as an organic system, not a composite mechanism of separable parts; each language is thus a web in which any given term has meaning in terms of its relation to other terms.

Is the web of meaning that is language perceived by the Monacan to be unique to each cultural group, and is each group perceived as having, within its own language, the stories and songs that were given to it from the Creator as a natural inheritance? This notion, also articulated by George-Kanentiio, is shared by many American Indian peoples. Basso has demonstrated that for Apache people, specific geographic features and locations are believed to participate in human events, creating ethical stories that are spatially anchored (1987). These visual representations on the landscape serve as a series of moral reminders to guide people toward “right” behavior.

For contemporary Monacan people, whose history of contact with Europeans differs from that of tribes in the Southwest and other regions, and whose language was lost several generations ago, this discussion raises several questions critical to their notions of collective identity and language ideology. Monacans have already reached the point at which they cannot address the natural world and their ancestors in their native language. Moreover, they now have more recent ancestors who, like themselves, never spoke Tutelo. How, then, and with what words, are they to speak to the world and to those who came before them? Do tribal members express this contradiction in terms of their own conceptions of tribal identity?

On Discursive Domain and Ethnographic Context

In conceptualizing Monacan language ideology and any collective response to language shift and ultimate loss, it is helpful to turn to sociolinguistics and to examine the role of cultural context in shaping speech practices. Different cultures have widely divergent practices, as Hymes indicates (1972:42). American Indian communities, like all others, exhibit ways of speaking and rules for culturally appropriate communication that cannot be predicted without direct observation. Hymes notes the need to consider the ethnography of speaking; that is, the cultural context within which a domain may or may not occur. He asserts that it is necessary to discover the indigenous categories in order to understand the speech form (1962:26). Furthermore, “even the seemingly most obvious domains cannot be taken for granted...structural analysis of meaning must first demonstrate that a domain is a domain for speakers of the language in question. What

the domain includes, what it excludes, what features define it and its elements, cannot be prescribed in advance” (Hymes 1962: 19).

What Westerners consider inanimate or mute entities have not always been so to Monacan people: in the Monacan worldview of the past, ancestor/deity figures, deceased persons, geographic features, and animals were not only subjects to whom speech acts should be directed; they were entitled to respect through honorific address. Among the Tutelo, for example, the Four Nights Harvest Dance addressed three female grandmother spirits associated with crops, the Spirit Adoption Ceremony addressed the spirit of a person recently deceased, and other songs were directed to food spirits (Kurath 1981). Stories from the Biloxi, a linguistically related southeastern group (see Figure 3), involved such figures as the Ancient of Crows, the Wolf, and numerous spirits, all of whom conversed with human beings (Dorsey and Swanton 1912).

How does traditional communicative practice resonate with contemporary Monacan views, and to what degree can acculturation be perceived to affect those views? Hymes notes that contexts of use define relevant frames, sets of items, and dimensions of contrast (1962:20). He stresses too that cultural change, such as that which occurs during language shift, results in points of both congruence and conflict as differing cultural rules that govern speech acts collide. The category of receiver (also called the addressee or interlocutor) can be considered one of seven factors comprising a speech event, the others being the sender, the message form, the channel (i.e., speaking, writing, singing, etc.), the code, the topic, and the setting.

Hymes states that depending on cultural beliefs, the categories of senders and receivers may overlap with human beings (1962). Among Siouan speakers, the Lakota traditionally believed that spiritual power could convey on some individuals the ability to understand birds, animals, spirits of ancestors, and thunder beings (Neihardt 1993:537). The Hidatsa, like many tribes throughout the Western hemisphere, engaged in singing to their corn plants to encourage their growth (Wilson 1981:175). Additionally, the Crow used to participate in a ceremony called the Cooked Meat Singing, which featured the medicines of mountain rock spirits and which included addressing specific medicine rocks through song (Voget 1995:38-39).

Critical to an understanding of Monacan linguistic identity is the issue of communicative domain. The logic of domain analysis was articulated by Joshua Fishman (1972). Integral to this perspective, for Fishman, are behavioral norms perceived as societal rules and defined as collective regularities. The concept of domain relates language choices to general institutions within and between societies. A fixed set of domains cannot be determined in advance for every case; Fishman imagines various categories of participant, social contexts, and levels of focus, and he locates the findings of appropriate domains in the investigator's intuition. He notes, "Domains enable us to understand that language choice and topic...are...related to widespread sociocultural norms and expectations." Domains he notes include the family, the playground, the school, the church, literature, the press, the military, the courts, and the governmental administration—categories that are applicable only to certain cultures (Hymes 1972).

In relation to one aspect of domain in particular—the category of addressee—Susan Gal's (1979) work on Hungarian-German language shift in the community of

Oberwart, Austria, creates an interesting issue for many indigenous language speakers. As the community shifted from its native Hungarian to the more prestigious German language at the time, results of her interviews regarding Hungarian subjects' language choices looked something like this:

		<i>Interlocutors</i>							
Speakers	Age	God	Grand- parents	Parents	Pals	Siblings	Spouse	Children	Grand- children
A	14	G	G,H	G	G	G			
B	17	G,H	G,H	G	G	G			
C	25	H	G,H	G,H	G	G	G	G	
D	27	H	H	G,H	G	G	G		
J	39	H	H	H	G,H	G,H	G,H		
N	52	H	H	G,H	H		G,H	G	G
O	62	H	H	H	H	H	G,H	G,H	G
Q	63	H	H	H	H	H	H		
R	64	H	H	H	H	H	H	G,H	

Table 1. After Susan Gal (1979: 134; *modifications mine*). Data are from interviews. G= German. H= Hungarian. Spaces indicate inapplicable questions.

Immediately apparent is the correlation between age and language choice, and the way the curve is skewed from Hungarian toward German for the younger generations. Less apparent, perhaps, is that with the exception of God, all of the interlocutors are human beings. For American Indian peoples, the range of interlocutors needs to be

expanded to include ancestors, animals, geographic features such as stones and mountains, and perhaps natural elements such as winds or thunder. That range, however, is both culturally particular and dependent on the values assimilated by those who have experienced not just language shift but a concomitant shift in perception as well. To assume that these categories would be similar in all languages is ethnocentric, and the weakness of Gal's model, widely used as it is, is that it does not consider domains to be culturally relevant constructs rather than universals. We can imagine that, as language shift occurred among the Monacan people during the late 1800s and early 1900s, from the Monacan language to English, results of similar interviews might have looked like this:

		<i>Interlocutors</i>										
Speaker	Age	Features of Land	Animal	Ancestors	God/Creator	Grand-parents	Parents	Pals	Sibling	Spouse	Child	Grand child
A	14	-	-	-	E	E	E	E	E			
B	17	-	-	-	E	E	E	E	E			
C	20	-	-	-	E	M,E	M,E	E	E			
D	23	-	-	-	E	M,E	M,E	E	E	E		
E	35	-	-	-	E	M	M,E	E	E	E	E	
F	44	-	-	-	M,E	M	M	M,E	M,E	M,E	E	E
G	50	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M,E	M	E	E
H	56	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	E	E
I	60	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M,E	M,E
J	70	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	M

Table 2. M= Monacan. E= English. Spaces indicate inapplicable questions. (-) indicates disappearance of domain.

In the northeast and mid-Atlantic regions of the United States, language shift often occurred over the span of only a few generations, due to the intense pressure on Native peoples to either assimilate or to abandon their homelands. Often this shift was accelerated by representatives of Christian churches, who expressed rigid beliefs about the nature of God and appropriate human moral behavior. In the tables above, “God” is an entity to whom Christian worshippers relate, while those who espoused traditional Native forms of spirituality would more likely have addressed a “Creator” or “Great Mystery.” As Christianity spread through indigenous communities, people were pressured to stop addressing other-than-human entities, except for God, because this was considered idolatrous behavior.

What is missing in this imagined schematic is the means through which a Monacan would address geographic features, animals, and ancestors without being able to speak to these interlocutors in the ancestral language. The spaces marked with a dash, I hypothesize, constitute a way to conceptualize the language ghost: as the absence of appropriate cultural categories of addressees which, in the shift to English, are dropped from what is considered possible and can thus no longer be addressed. The need to address them is no longer acknowledged. However, for some tribal members, they are not completely forgotten. For Native cultural practitioners such as George-Kanentiio, their inaccessibility is a tragedy of unspeakable proportions. For others, who have made the transition to a Western way of viewing the world and who have accepted those values, Christian or not, the culturally specific categories of addresses no longer exist: the chart does not apply, and the language ghost has disappeared.

Nationhood, Peoplehood, and Language

For those Monacan people who have not shifted to a Western perspective, the not-quite-forgotten addressees are important. They are the ones that instantiate the sacred relationship to the homeland, which is at the core of indigenous peoplehood. Such a notion of peoplehood stands in contrast to existing scholarly notions of “nationhood,” which are also—but differently—based on language and on memory. In this section I examine notions of nationhood and peoplehood in relation to the divergent ideologies expressed in the study.

According to Fei (1980), a typical non-indigenous model for defining a nationality includes these four criteria: common language, common territory, common economic base, and common psychological character. Alternatively, Alfred and Cornassel (2005) have elaborated on the “peoplehood” model originated by Spicer. This iteration of the model (developed by Cherokee/Creek scholar Tom Holm et al.), views peoplehood as including four interlocking concepts: language, homeland, sacred history, and ceremony. The model reconfigures group identity from a basis of indigenous understanding.

The connection between nationalism and language has been made by numerous researchers, including Haugen (1972) and later Gellner, who claims that the national unit is most commonly defined in terms of language (1983:1). A similar claim can be made for the connection between language and peoplehood.

For Benedict Anderson, nations are imagined political communities, conceived as communities because “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may

prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (1991:9). The dedication to nation felt by its members has its roots in concepts of culture, the two systems of relevance being the dynastic realm and the religious community. The notion of a religious community, according to Anderson, incorporates the idea of a sacred language unique to the membership, an idea that is less compatible with some modern conceptions of nation-state than in times past, but wholly compatible with the indigenous views previously expressed. The imagined nation is generally distinguished by an immemorial past, laced with mythological characters or ancestors that participate in the shared story of the group.

For Monacan people, the construction of peoplehood is perceived not through language but through the lens of shared suffering that the tribe has endured since its ancestral relative encountered John Smith’s English colonists in 1608. This narrative constitutes a sacred history—a story of violent displacement as catastrophic disease and early settlers forced the ancestral Monacans to abandon their claims to the land and intertribal warfare forced remnant tribes to band together for protection, followed by the history of racist oppression and social humiliation conveyed by the larger non-Native society upon Virginia Indians, and the contemporary and persistent failure of the U.S. government to officially acknowledge the tribes even as they pursue that recognition in Congress today.

Ultimately the story Monacans tell about themselves is one of collective trauma, variously experienced over almost 400 years. The conditions of such trauma grow from injury or assault on social life as it is presently understood. Chaos ensues, and people become unsure as to what they should believe. Collective trauma threatens to invalidate

people's usual assessments of social reality. The social system is disrupted, requiring the attention of all population subgroups. Neal has noted, "The cumulative effects of national traumas are of central importance in forging the collective identity of any given group" (1998:22).

Trauma is collectively remembered in some cases by commemoration and in others by the development of traditions that address the group's shared historical experiences. Reflecting on the more contemporary experience of the Lòlop'ò Lòlomo minority community (called Yi or Lipo by others) in southwest China under communism, Mueggler notes, "Life in this era was inflected by eruptions into the present of unreconciled fragments of the past" (2001:3). To combat the oppressiveness of the communist state, the Lòlop'ò developed their own stories of past events and used them "to assemble an oppositional practice of time, a practice that deliberately undermined the temporality of official history" (2001:7). This same practice can be found among Monacan people, who voice their collective story as an oppositional narrative, a story of four centuries of resistance to the forces of colonialism and the dominant culture that still threatens to swallow them.

Barth's idea that history is a struggle to appropriate the past is relevant here. The construction of nation, he asserts, has to do with the codification of idioms (1969:35). One of these signals is undoubtedly language, as demonstrated by Haugen (1966). Internal cohesion is achieved through acceptance of one's own language as a boundary marker of nationality. Through language, the group's story is perpetuated, and the people continue to participate in their own remembrance of themselves, a process that works

backward and forward as new narratives are created in an evolving process of interpreting the past (Shaw 2001).

For Monacans, shared notions of a common homeland and a sacred history of trauma remain applicable. However, the language they once shared has shifted to English as a result of colonization, and the ceremonies they once practiced together disappeared. Now that the language is appearing in the ceremonial context of reburial rites, will it be employed in other contexts, and if so, which ones? Are Monacan people interested in re-establishing the two missing aspects of peoplehood through ceremonial practices, re-connecting with their ancestors and the spiritual beings they once believed to inhabit their homeland? Or is the reclamation of their ancestral language important as a badge of national identity that can be publicly displayed and used to substantiate claims to Indian heritage? What would constitute a language revitalization effort for the Monacan people?

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSIONS

The idea of documenting American Indian languages was initially driven by Boasian notions of salvage linguistics, a collection of notions that has continued to inform endangered language documentation and development (ELDD) since the late nineteenth century—the period during which Horatio Hale collected most of the existing language data on Tutelo from his aged informant, Nikonha (Hale 1883). Primary among those Boasian notions was the belief that American Indians’ cultural traditions would soon die out, a belief that has proven to be only partially true as we move into the twenty-first century. For tribes such as the Monacan, the Boasian-era emphasis on collecting language data was fortuitous; the existence of a grammar and dictionary for Tutelo that incorporates the work of those early linguistic anthropologists leaves open the possibility of language revival, to the degree that Monacan people and those from related tribes might wish to pursue it. In this final chapter, I examine the idea of a Monacan attempt to revitalize the Tutelo language in relation to the varying ideologies held by tribal members and situate that idea within the literature on American Indian language ideologies, and on cultural particularity, discussed below.

When I entered graduate study with the idea of undertaking a language documentation project, I had already formulated some ideas about the importance of revitalizing Tutelo for the benefit of present and future generations of Monacan people. I believed then that a full and fluent recovery of the Tutelo language would permit the tribe

to assert a concept of peoplehood that some tribal members, myself included, found incomplete at present. I rejected the notion of Monacan people using the Lakota language because its connection to our own ancestral language was too far removed for my comfort, and I identified fully with the group that believed the recovery of Tutelo would enable us to reconnect with our sense of the land as our home place and with the ancestors whose spirits still inhabited it.

However, in the course of developing this project, I have modified my beliefs. As Dobrin and Berson (2011) have noted, “The very imperative to preserve cultural form must be recognized as a cultural phenomenon, one that is manifest in a community in particular domains to varying degrees, or perhaps not at all.” The present study has demonstrated the varying degrees to which Monacan tribal members find the recovery of Tutelo, or the widespread use of Lakota, to be desirable or necessary. The results did not fall neatly into the categories I originally imagined. They are affected by the age of the participants, their religious preferences and practices, their affiliations with a particular spiritual leader, and their beliefs concerning tribal leadership and public linguistic performance. The ideologies informing participants’ responses are messy, at times contradictory, and quintessentially divided. They are incompletely conceptualized and only partially articulated by participants. They are complicated, indicative of the disjuncture described by Barbra Meeks, who begins her ethnographic study of northern Athabaskan language revitalization with an excerpt from Ofelia Zepeda’s poem:

Some have carried it, held it close, protected.

Others have pulled it along like a reluctant child.

Still others have waved it like a flag, a signal to others.

And some have filled it with rage

And dare others to come close.

And there are those who find their language

A burdensome shackle.

They continually pick at the lock.

(Zepeda 2008:64)

Disjuncture, Meeks says, are “everyday points of discontinuity and contradiction...that interrupt the flow of action, communication, or thought,” typically sociolinguistic in nature, where “multiple, shifting, and conflicting language ideologies or semiotic practices collide—or move past each other” (2010:x).

The contributors to Field and Kroskrity’s (2009) anthology demonstrate that American Indian tribes in different regions traditionally held differing ideologies about language (19). However, many American Indian peoples’ beliefs about language are changing. As tribes have become more focused on administration and “recognition” and as people encounter the language ideologies of varying institutions in North America, they are rethinking values associated with language and language use. Most common is “an emergent ideological process of iconization between a language and various national, ethnic, and tribal identities” (23), suggesting that the discourse of nationalism has carried over into speech communities formerly defined as family or kinship groups.

These conflicting approaches to ancestral languages and multiple language ideologies held by members within even a single tribal community demonstrate powerfully the need to incorporate the *agency* of indigenous communities into language documentation and recovery projects. Moving beyond salvage linguistics necessitates recognizing the stake communities possess in deciding for themselves whether, and to what degree, they wish to recover or revitalize their languages, and even whether they wish to abandon them or lack sufficient interest to proceed, a heartbreaking prospect for some indigenous linguists who hope to reverse the trend toward “language suicide” they see in their communities (e.g., Perley 2011). Inherent in the linguist-community relationship is a power imbalance that has often unconsciously echoed the colonial encounter, reinforcing for indigenous communities the very experiences of powerlessness that accompanied language loss in the first place, even when the trained linguist is a member of their own community. As I have discovered, community membership is not itself a guarantee of the community’s complete trust, because even tribal members who pursue higher educations can be viewed with suspicion, and language projects that require “learning from a book” are less desirable to many Monacan people, such as George Whitewolf, than those that originate with cultural practitioners perceived to be authentic.

Considering the complexity of the Monacan community today—its geographic dispersal, its immersion in contemporary American culture, the twentieth-century intervention of the Episcopal mission in ways that Monacans perceive as both beneficial and disempowering for more than a hundred years, and ambivalent attitudes toward education and the value of writing in constructing Native language projects—it should

not be surprising that the present study's results, presented in Chapter 7, are mixed. For a few Monacan participants, the notion of language recovery or revitalization seems unlikely, uninteresting, or a waste of time. For many participants, the persistence of the idea of some degree of competency in an ancestral, Siouan language—whether Tutelo or Lakota—remains powerfully attractive as a marker of Monacan identity. For a somewhat smaller group of participants, the existence of a language ghost—the imperative need for linguistic means through which to address a culturally specific Creator, genealogically specific ancestors, geographically anchored features such as mountains, and local animal spirits—is not only plausible but painfully apparent.

It seems reasonable to suggest that the ideology of the first group, those uninterested in any ancestral language, can be framed and understood in Western terms: their ancestral language is a vestige of the past that is not tied to their understanding of their Monacan identity. The Tutelo adherents, on the other hand, may be constructing their ideas about language recovery through culturally and historically specific parameters, as outlined below, evoking the missing interlocutors as entities who still need to be addressed. However, they may also be responding to a Western nationalist notion that a distinct people should speak a distinct language. The Lakota adherents fall somewhere in between, because their desire could perhaps be interpreted through a Western lens, in terms of an historic connection between the Lakota language of the present and the Monacan language of the past; or it could also be viewed culturally, as being specific to that Siouan language family and therefore to the familial and perhaps cultural connections implied between all Siouan speakers.

Cultural Particularity

Beyond the neat categories I had envisioned with this study and beneath the complicated results I tried to fit into pre-imagined ideologies lies a deeper issue, one that might easily have been overlooked had it not been for a few studies within and outside the field of linguistics and language revitalization that point to culturally particular issues. In this section I discuss how important the notion of cultural particularity is to the study I conducted and how it fits the results into a larger pattern of American Indian language studies. Dobrin argues (2008:305) that “culturally particular concerns are likely to be significant in shaping the outcomes of ELDD programs” and suggests we need not assume that every convention that seems natural to Western linguists is imposed, inauthentic or unimportant; nor that cultural particularity be cast as a timeless indigenous cultural state that is not connected to outside influence. Nevertheless, the cultural worlds people create are distinct, she says, in terms of the “schemes of meaning” that shape and organize their interests and actions. We should be especially careful to acknowledge concerns arising from the contemporary vernacular cultures of the communities whose languages we study.

Notable among such studies in linguistics is Eleanor Nevins’ work at “Fort Apache” (2013), otherwise known as the White Mountain Apache reservation in Arizona. Her study illustrates some of the problems that can occur in indigenous communities; in this case, the language project was implemented through a school-based setting, taking it out of the traditionally centered family domain. While some tribal members enthusiastically supported the project, others felt alienated from the language recovery efforts. Some elders in particular articulated a concern that although the younger people

were learning to speak the language, they were not learning Apache ways of acting within community. The project was ultimately abandoned.

Nevins notes that although conflicts involving language revitalization and maintenance projects are common, such conflicts remain underreported in the literature, with remarkably few exceptions (see Dobrin 2008 for examples). She indicates that the paradoxes and conflicts she encountered within the indigenous community are paralleled in others; further, she argues that

such contrasts are implicit in the terms through which indigenous communities are related to surrounding sociopolitical orders and are germane to the meaning and political status of indigenous language maintenance efforts in ways that often go unrecognized by language planners (2013:15).

Looking back through the history of Monacan interaction with outsiders during the twentieth century, particularly through the mission school and St. Paul's church, it seems obvious that Monacan people were pressured by the sociopolitical order around them to abandon their language, to substitute English, and to let go of their traditional spiritual practices, including the interlocutors whose absence constitutes the language ghost. It seems equally obvious that the only schooling available to Monacan people at the time was through the first- to seventh-grade mission school, and that white teachers and mission workers imposed their ideas about education and assimilation onto the Monacan population at large. Susan Philips (1993) has documented some of the cultural issues that arise in typical Western-style classroom settings when the pupils are American Indian: in the case she references, the students were not taught at home to call attention to

themselves, and they learned by imitating elders rather than through written instruction. In their community, communicative competence was not acquired through the processes used by non-Indian teachers, and the students were often judged to be unprepared or incapable when in fact they were confused by the teacher's expectations. Such behaviors as raising one's hand to answer questions seemed inappropriate to them, but they were unable to articulate why they felt incompetent even though they were not.

Along these same lines, the transmission of authority of speaking, within an indigenous community context, is of critical import. Hymes (1981) notes that even when community speakers possess the ability to communicate in their language to outsiders, they may not feel competent to perform in the language, because that authority has not been conferred upon them by their elders or others who have been designated as keepers of tribal tradition. This concern is reminiscent of George Whitewolf's assertion that "speaking Indian" needs to be learned from cultural practitioners perceived as authentic and not "from a book," an assertion which may yet have bearing on the ultimate success or failure of a Monacan language project involving the use of documentary sources rather than speakers. It may be that Monacan people from both the Tutelo-preference and the Lakota-preference groups would choose Tutelo as the language to revive, if that language were available to be learned from cultural practitioners, as Lakota is, rather than from written texts or language lessons.

Similarly, for the Monacan community in this study, we can see that attitudes toward revitalization are affected by the way in which verbal performance is linked to the appropriate display of cultural wealth. In many contemporary Native American cultures, the retention of language is seen as a marker of authenticity as well as a badge of

competence. Speaking one's ancestral language validates the speaker both within tribal communities and in situations where outsiders are present. Robert Moore notes that in the same community studied by Hymes a generation ago, younger speakers are now using the language in this way, displaying "items of inherited wealth (words)" to increase the legitimacy and prestige of the speaker (1988:463), even to the point of treating the language as "mythological" by refusing to speak it except in winter, a formerly seasonal restriction toward storytelling that crosses many tribal lines (Spier and Sapir 1930, Hymes 1966) but was not historically applied to language use per se.

This perception of cultural authenticity was clearly a factor in the results of the present study, where a number of tribal members articulated a desire to use either Tutelo or Lakota in performative contexts—in public prayers, at tribal meetings, and in the context of reburial ceremonies involving ancestral remains. It matters, to many Monacans, to have someone present who can "speak" in a Native language. Sometimes it matters that this language is Tutelo, as in my own case, where I've been asked to say a prayer in our language during occasions when outsiders are present or to do so prior to a tribal meeting. Before his death, George Whitewolf was usually asked, but he prayed in Lakota. I was present at two recent funerals where Matt Latimer, who worked to learn Lakota with George, prayed in Lakota and conducted ceremonies on behalf of the departed Monacan person, along with Uncle Eddie, a well-known Monacan elder. Part of George's cultural capital came from his assertion that he had studied spiritual ways with Lakota practitioners, but part of it was conferred by his claim of being able to "speak Indian," using the Lakota language.

Historical Particularity

The story Monacans tell about themselves, as previously mentioned, is one of shared trauma and persecution, collectively experienced over more than four centuries. Central to that persecution are the ways in which Monacan people were targeted during the twentieth century for their perceived mixed-race status and their resistance to being called by any label other than Indian. Monacans today characterize this period as one of “documentary genocide” (Hardin 2000); in other words, a period during which state and local officials erased their Indian identity by changing their race on official documents. In this section I consider how such instances of historical particularity profoundly affect Monacan responses to language issues. Without access to formal education beyond the seventh grade and with few resources at their disposal, the Monacan people of past generations were seriously disadvantaged to respond. Many were unable to read or write English fluently, thus their access to a language of prestige and social power was limited. Their only recourse was to depend on non-Native advocates, and the only non-Native people they trusted were the mission workers of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, who pressured them to abandon their cultural practices, embrace Christianity and assimilate into the social order around them. We can see the results in those church-going Monacans who assert that speaking English matters more than retaining or reviving an ancestral language.

In addition, Monacan people developed a persistent mistrust of outsiders, especially educated outsiders, recalling their relatives’ painful experiences with Estabrook and McDougle, the authors of *Mongrel Virginians*, who were invited into people’s homes and then betrayed them by publishing pejorative inferences about them;

and with Walter Plecker and his racist colleagues, who insisted on relabeling their birth certificates and who wrote disparaging letters about them to local officials. It is understandable, therefore, that contemporary community members react with suspicion to the appearance of educated outsiders, especially academic researchers, in their midst even today. This mistrust extends to educated tribal members who did not grow up in the community, whose agendas are unclear, and even to those such as myself who have spent years working with community members toward community-defined objectives. There is thus a basis for historical particularity in this instance: a clearly perceived, neocolonial history of abuse of power on the part of researchers, state and local officials, and others, which has perpetuated community mistrust of outsiders, specifically, and of Western modes of education in general.

Conclusion

It is undoubtedly the case that cultural or historical particularities accompany every situation of language shift and revitalization, whether they are apparent to linguists and other academic researchers or not. Few researchers and educators from outside the indigenous community, and often even from within it, are adequately prepared to encounter the complicated social and political environments to which they present themselves. We are often so deeply grounded in our cultural assumptions that we miss even the most otherwise obvious instances of difference, such as those that combined to create the now-invisible interlocutors, which constitute the Monacan language ghost. The

present study is a particular ethnographic depiction of one cultural instance that calls for modification to the way we imagine language ideologies and situational particularities.

Ultimately, the study presents an argument to look beyond traditionally envisioned categories of interlocutors as culturally specific groups of addressees, to consider the ways in which people learn and acquire communicative authenticity within their community as being culturally specific, to understand how people construct a tribal or national identity through historically particular circumstances and how they interpret that story, and to consider whether people within a single speech community may have widely different beliefs regarding language documentation and revitalization. In a larger sense, it urges us to consider the ways in which various indigenous peoples imagine themselves within the world, how they interact through language, the points at which disjuncture emerges between competing language ideologies, and why.

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APPENDIX

Twenty-six people participated in interviews, and another forty individuals contributed comments related to language and tribal identity. I intended to speak with 50 to 100 individuals. My final group of participants numbered 66, 26 of whom granted in-depth interviews.

Of the 26 interviewees, only six lived outside the immediate area surrounding Amherst County, including Lynchburg, Monroe, and Madison Heights. One participant lived in Maryland, three in other areas of Virginia, one in West Virginia, and one in New Jersey.

END NOTES

ⁱ The term “Monacan” refers to both the tribal group that ultimately remained in Amherst County and to the larger, earlier cultural confederation of tribes that existed in Virginia before 1776. “Tutelo” refers both to the documented language that was spoken by members of the Monacan confederacy and to the specific tribal group that left Virginia in the mid-eighteenth century and moved repeatedly northward until they reached Brantford, Ontario, where the language was documented by Horatio Hale.

ⁱⁱ Confusingly, Big Sandy is also the name of another watercourse in West Virginia that drains into the Cheat River but that would be an unlikely water route due to its numerous Class IV rapids.

ⁱⁱⁱ In a peculiarly ironic twist, Amherst was named for an American general, Jeffrey Amherst, who never set foot in Virginia but who was known as “the conqueror of Canada.” It was Amherst’s idea to give smallpox-infested blankets to Indian tribes on the frontier, in order to exterminate them (Rice, 1970: 56).

^{iv} List obtained by Rosemary Whitlock (Monacan), who interviewed William Sandidge III, former Clerk of the Court for Amherst County during the eugenics period. Published in *The Monacan Indian Nation of Virginia: The Drums of Life*, University of Alabama Press, 2008.