73. WAMPUM PRODUCTION IN NEW NETHERLAND AND COLONIAL NEW YORK, by Elizabeth Peña (1990, 17:8-14)

It is well known that shell beads and pendants were valuable items in proto-historic North America. In the 17th-century, tubular clam or conch-shell beads known as *wampum* or *sewan* served as a medium of exchange between European colonists and Native Americans. Archaeological and ethnohistorical studies have shown that, in the 17th century, coastal Algonquian groups made wampum to trade to Europeans for firearms and other items. The Europeans used these wampum beads to obtain pelts from Native American hunters. Because of wampum's high value to many Native American groups, wampum strings and belts became important as a means of treaty negotiation and ratification. The exchange of wampum governed many transactions between Europeans and Native Americans. Wampum was a "primitive valuable" to Native Americans; that is, it circulated in non-commercial, ritual payments. In trade between Europeans and Native Americans, wampum was "primitive money"–it maintained non-commercial uses while also being used in the marketplace.

The importance of wampum within the European colonial community is less well known. In the 17th century, a severe specie shortage provided the impetus for the Dutch colonists of Beverwyck, or Albany, to use wampum beads as cash (sometimes referred to as "cash money" or "all purpose money") in local transactions. In this case, wampum fulfilled the traditional criteria of money: it served as a medium of exchange, it had a common measure of value, it was a means of accumulating wealth, and a standard of deferred payment. Wampum was certified legal tender, and the colonial court records are filled with references to wampum exchange between colonists, such as the man who, in 1655, avoided military service in the Dutch West India Company by paying another man "the sum of 70 guilders in sewan and a pair of shoes." It is important to note that, unlike New England, the colonists in New Netherland were neither farmers nor pilgrims, but urban merchants and traders. They had long been accustomed to cash transactions.

New Netherland did receive some coins, mainly Spanish pieces-of-eight, from the Dutch properties in the West Indies, but these coins had often been debased or clipped. Despite the fact that tampering with coins was a capital offense in the Netherlands, such behavior was not uncommon. New Netherland's coin problems were compounded by the dominance of the Boston merchants, who demanded coin for trade. The Dutch hoped to discover the source of precious metals in Curaçao, but had no success. By the mid-17th century, New Netherlanders had become accustomed to using a wide variety of monies. For example, an inventory from that period lists shillings, pieces-of-eight and quarter pieces-of-eight, ducatoons, rixdollars and half rixdollars, silver coin, specie, and "one little sack with two Indian bags containing fl. 275 in wampum."

Around this time, wampum lost its legal status in New England, and poor-quality beads were dumped on the New York market. These beads were roughly made and often unpierced. Wampum remained legal tender in New York until the beginning of the 18th century. At this point, coinage seems to have been more plentiful, and the use of wampum as cash seems to have ceased. The market for wampum was, however, inexhaustible, as traders continually expanded the frontier. Wampum remained important in the fur trade and treaty negotiation and ratification.

In 1986, archaeological evidence of colonial wampum production was unearthed in Albany, New York, by Hartgen Archeological Associates at a site known as the KeyCorp site, named for the Key Bank tower that stands on the site today. Albany, the capital of New York state, is situated on the west bank of the Hudson River, some 150 miles north of New York City. Dutch traders and merchants settled here shortly after Henry Hudson's visit in 1609, and in 1624, the Dutch West India company established Fort Orange at this location. The town of Beverwyck grew up just north of the fort, and was officially established in 1652. When the English took control of New Netherland, they renamed the town Albany. Twenty-two years later, Albany received its city charter. When the archaeological evidence for wampum production was brought to light in downtown Albany, it seemed logical to assume that this material dated to the 17th century, when wampum was in local use as legal tender and when Beverwyck/Albany served as a fur-trade hub. An analysis of the materials, however, revealed that this was not the case.

The KeyCorp site marks the 17th-century home of Volkert Jansen Douw, a Dutch settler. In 1683, the Dutch Reformed Church purchased Douw's house for use as an almshouse. Mid- to late-17th-century strata contained both wampum and glass beads (such as blue and white glass trade beads of Kidd variety IIIa12), "cassock buttons," jews harps, copper bell fragments, and 17th-century glass and ceramics. These layers, however, were confined to the south half of the site only.

It was the north half of the site that contained evidence of wampum production in the form of shell debris, partially formed beads, and tools, rather than the finished wampum beads themselves. Production (Fig. 1) involved clipping

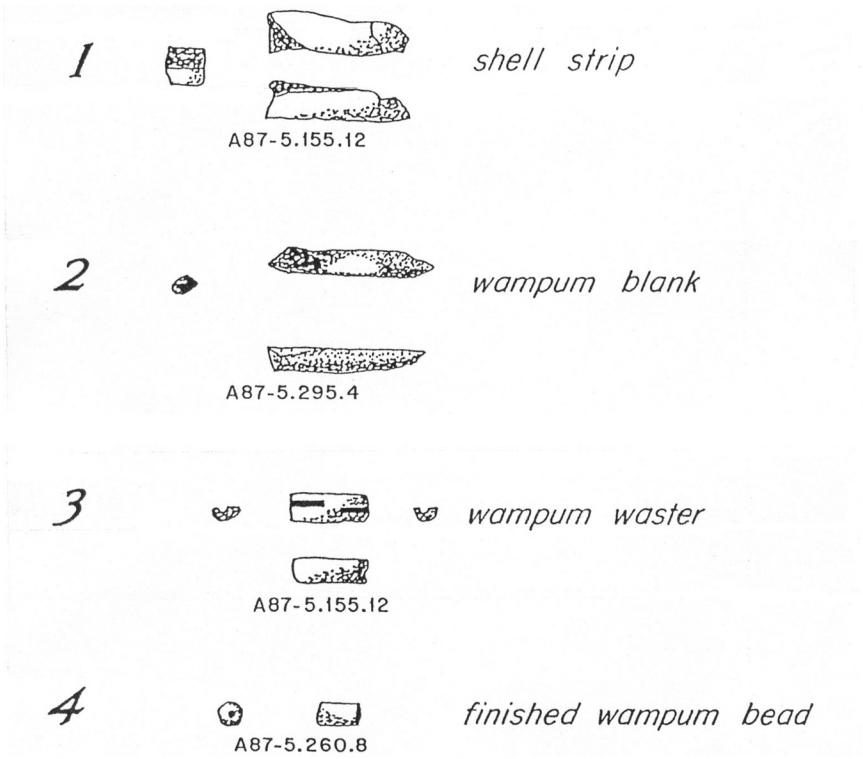

Figure 1. Stages of wampum production. All artifacts are from the KeyCorp site and shown full size.

or hammering clam and conch shells into fragments, then knapping them into strips. The next step required using a whetstone to smooth the shell strips into beadlike cylinders. Next, these wampum blanks were further smoothed and drilled. Finally, the bored beads were smoothed and strung a final time. At the KeyCorp site, the production debris consisted of 568 pieces of cut clam and conch shell, 143 small shell fragments, 133 shell strips, 24 wampum blanks (partially shaped beads), and 35 unfinished beads (beads which had been discarded after partial drilling). The tools associated with these processes are whetstones and iron drills (Fig. 2), which were also found in these KeyCorp contexts. These remnants of the production process were clearly in context with ceramics and other materials dating to the first half of the 18th century. In addition, the wampum-production component contained five coins from the reign of George II, dating to ca. 1730-1755.

The KeyCorp property's last trace in the documentary record is in the Church's 1720 Act of Incorporation. Since we know that the church's almshouse stood here, it would appear that almshouse residents made wampum. This group of people may have included poor people who lived or worked in the almshouse. We know of several rather marginal members of the community who, in the earliest years of the 18th century, rented parts of the almshouse to live in with their families. For example, a Robert Barrett, a British soldier with a Dutch wife and six children, rented part of the almshouse. Barrett turns up in the records performing a variety of small jobs such as city bellman and night watchman. It is possible that people or families in situations similar to Barrett's may have been responsible for the wampum-production debris at the KeyCorp site. It is also noteworthy that the almshouse stood in the first ward of Albany, a quarter characterized by small-time craftsmen working at a variety of trades, such as cordwaining, brickmaking, weaving, and blacksmithing. Wampum production may have fit into this scheme as another part-time, marginal, urban craft.

Wampum production, however, must have involved participants other than the actual producers. While the Hudson River is tidal as far north as Albany, marine shell would still have to be imported from coastal areas. The beads had to be marketed and sold somewhere on the frontier, as they no longer served as locally used legal tender. Perhaps the Dutch Reformed Church acted as overseer to this process. Local entrepreneurs may have played a role: a 1756 document listing houses in Albany suitable for the quartering of British troops mentions Jacobus Hilton, "wampum maker." Hilton's house is described as quite spacious, and is marked by the comment "good house." It would seem that Hilton had attained some measure of economic success, but whether from wampum making or his other profession,

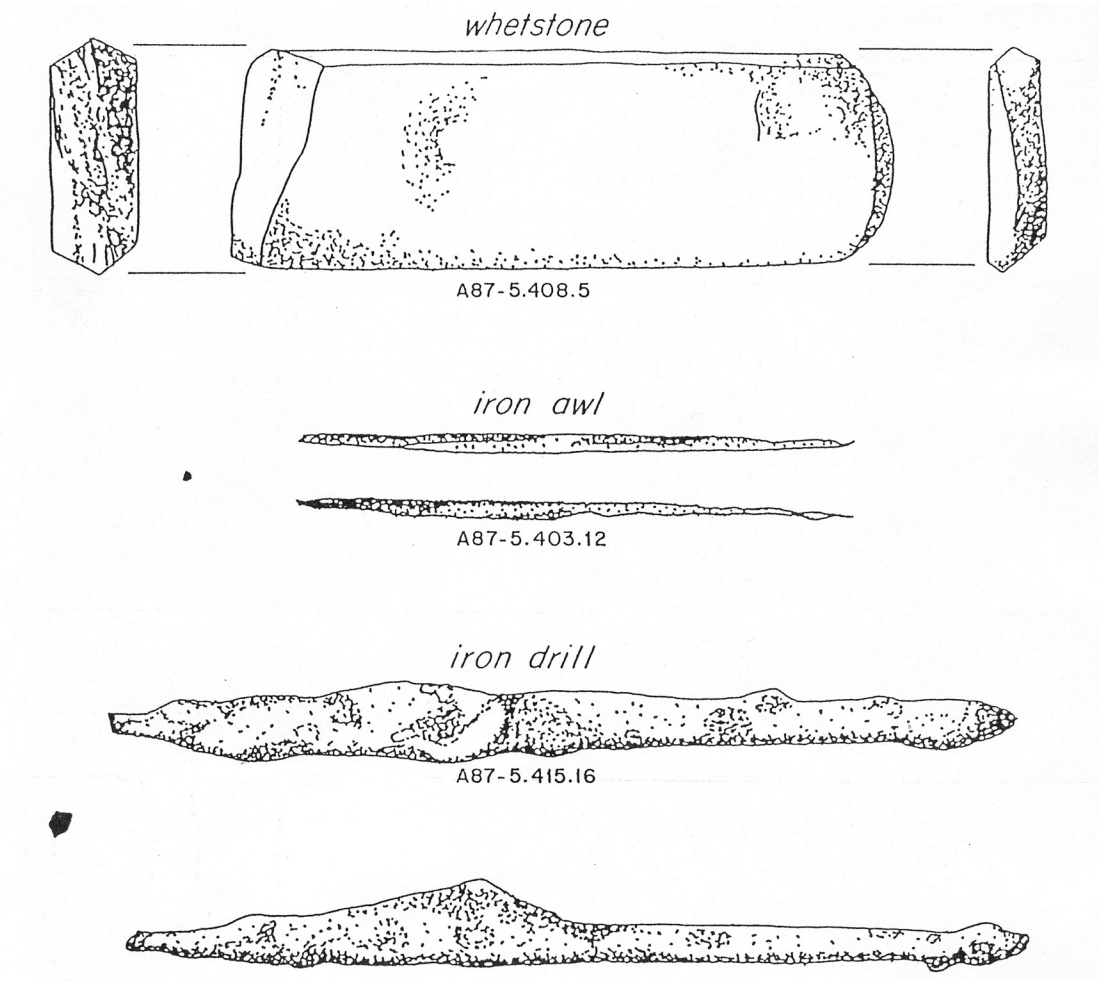

Figure 2. Wampum-production tools from the KeyCorp site (shown full size).

farming, is unclear. Nonetheless, people like Hilton may have participated in Albany's wampum production.

To conclude, the New Netherlanders' adoption of wampum as a substitute for cash during the 17th-century specie shortage illustrates the monetary orientation that was an important feature of Dutch culture and the Dutch colonial experience. The fact that the 18th-century inhabitants of Albany manufactured wampum as a commodity, and considering the organization of production, suggests a distinctly Dutch, capitalistic attitude. Jacobus Hilton, the wampum maker, provides a good example of the persistent "Dutchness" in 18th-century Albany: of English descent, Hilton had a Dutch first name. It is unclear whether his wife, Judith Marten or Maarten, was Dutch or English, but the couple did baptize their children in Albany's Dutch Reformed Church. Hilton represents the quintessential 18th-century Albany resident, whose way of life was shaped by the Dutch cultural and economic ethos that lingered in Albany long after the establishment of English political control.

74. GLASS TRADE BEADS FROM A COUSHATTA INDIAN SITE IN NORTHWESTERN LOUISIANA, by Timothy K. Perttula (1993, 22:13-16)

Trade beads are one of the more common types of European goods on 19th-century Native American sites. The Coushatta (or Koasati) tribe, which had moved from Alabama into Spanish Louisiana in the 1760s, and into the Red River valley of northwestern Louisiana about 1804, obtained a variety of goods in American, Mexican, and Texan trading posts in exchange for pelts, tallow, and bear oil (National Archives 1809-1821: folios 22-23; Winfrey and Day 1966, 2:165). Such goods included blankets, wool hats, needles, calico shawls, vermillion, iron pots, tin cups, ribbon, flax thread, stitching thread, combs, iron knives, gunflints, silver gorgets, corn hoes, hatchets, shears, plates/saucers, brass, silk calico, rifles, cow bells, gloves, powder, lead, scissors, blue stroud, gun locks, butcher knives, linen shirts, wood axes, garters, tobacco, and beads (Perttula 1993).