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Residential Burial, Gender Roles, and Political Development in Late Prehistoric and Early Cherokee Cultures of the Southern Appalachians

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ABSTRACT

Native people in the southern Appalachians began placing graves in and around residences in the 13th century C.E. Burials previously were placed in specialized burial mounds that likely belonged to individual kin groups. For several centuries, the practice of residential burial was contemporaneous with burial in or near public buildings that sometimes were built on platform mounds. During this time, residential versus 'public' burial became related to spatial symbolism of gender and leadership roles. These changes suggest a developmental trajectory that distinguishes southern Appalachian societies from their contemporaries elsewhere in the southeastern U.S. [Mississippian, Cherokee, gender, North Carolina, Tennessee]

Archaeologists have long recognized that the locations where people choose to place graves often have social meaning and may relate to cultural constructs of identity, including kinship and status (Goldstein 1980; Parker Pearson 2000). The focus of this volume is on the placement of graves within domestic space, the various meanings that such grave placement may have for specific social groups or cultures, and the broader anthropological implications for the practice of such grave placement. We focus here on one geographic area, the southern Appalachian region of southeastern North America, where American Indian peoples practiced residential burial for five centuries. Of particular interest is that residences were not the only burial locations used during this time span in this region. Graves also were placed in nonresidential public places and buildings. Even more interesting are the demographic patterns of the individuals interred in the graves associated with these two locations.

We explore how this dual tradition of residential and public-area burial in the southern Appalachians relates to social processes in the region, including spatial symbolism in gender and leadership roles and the genesis of long-term corporate residences. We have argued elsewhere that gender-related differences observed in these mortuary programs correlate with gender-specific differences in political leadership and with how men and women acquired prestige (Rodning 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2009a, 2009b; Sullivan 2001, 2006; Sullivan and Rodning 2001). We specifically examine four archaeological sites: Toqua, Dallas, and Chota-Tanasee in eastern Tennessee, and the Coweeta Creek site in southwestern North Carolina (Figure 6.1). Dallas and Toqua represent two late prehistoric (C.E. 1200–1500)

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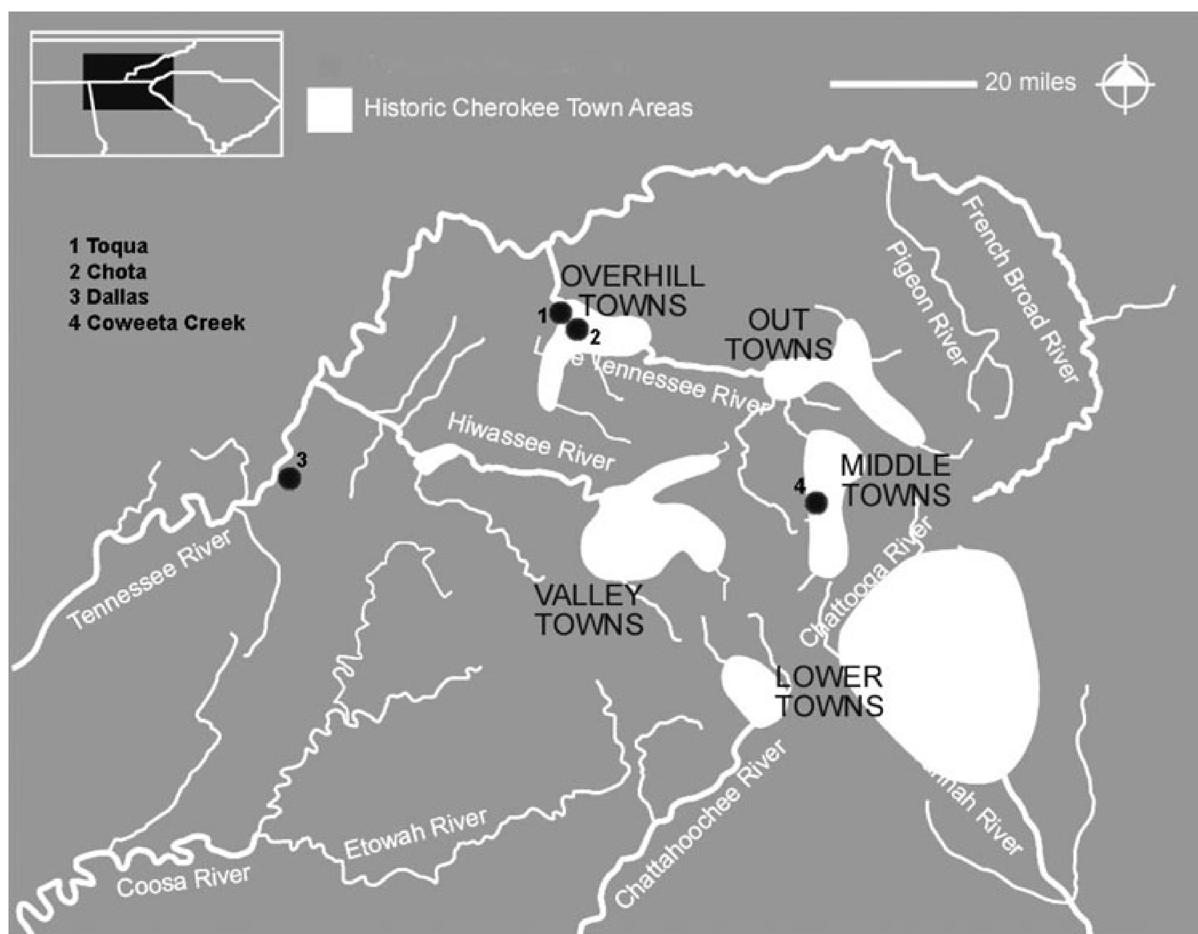


Figure 6.1. Locations of discussed sites in southern Appalachia.

towns that cannot be directly associated with a specific ethnic group from the historic period. Coweeta Creek and Chota are Cherokee towns dating to the 1600s and 1700s, respectively. Chota superceded the adjacent town of Tanasee.

Our study contributes to broader interests in the archaeology of burials within dwellings and in the vicinity of domestic architecture, and it also contributes to broader interests in relationships between gender and architecture in settlements and societies (Spain 1992). For example, as demonstrated by Vanessa Lea (1995, 2001), Kayapo villages in the Brazilian Amazon include male-dominated social and spatial domains associated with centrally located village plazas and men's houses, as well as domestic structures and related social domains dominated by women and situated along the outer edges of villages. At first glance, houses and households—the domain of women—seem peripheral or marginal, both spatially and in terms of practices of social production, inheritance, and community structure. On the contrary, these gendered architectural spaces manifest different social domains, both necessary to the vitality of Kayapo communities—including men's space at the village centers and women's space that encloses villages, differentiating the local village from the surrounding cultural landscape. Similarly, archaeologists have noted close relationships between women and longhouses in Iroquoian villages of northeastern North America (Kapches 1995; Prezzano 1997), and the presence of men's houses situated both at the centers and, in some cases, at the edges of tribal villages of Papua New Guinea (Roscoe 2008).

The Archaeological and Historical Background

During the 13th century C.E., prehistoric American Indians in the southern Appalachians began burying their dead in and around residences. Residential burial continued into

the 18th century and was practiced in the region by the historically known Cherokee. Although this 500-year-long tradition of residential burial documents one aspect of cultural continuity among peoples in this region, other aspects (e.g., pottery and other technological traditions) do not show such continuity. There are major gaps in knowledge of the disruption and devastation caused by contacts with Europeans to native social and political groupings, beginning with the Spanish in the mid-sixteenth century. As a result, a lineal connection between the late prehistoric towns and the Cherokee towns examined for this study cannot be made at this time. We also stress that while there may be commonalities among societies that practice residential burial, significant differences in the details of implementation of this tradition may shed light upon differences in cultural practices that relate to distinct cultural identities within the greater southern Appalachians, or to abrupt culture change following European contact. We will return to this idea in the last part of this chapter.

The practice of residential burial in the southern Appalachians was preceded by five centuries during which native groups in the ridges and valleys of eastern Tennessee, from present-day Knoxville southward, created specialized burial mounds (Schroedl et al. 1990). Less is known about the earlier mortuary practices of the native peoples in the Blue Ridge Mountains of western North Carolina (but see Dickens 1976, 1978, 1979; Keel 1976; Rodning and Moore 2010). By the 13th century, they too were placing graves in and around houses in a similar fashion.

In addition to residential burials, other graves were placed in or near large public buildings, some of which were built on large, earthen platform mounds. The majority of graves found in the platform mounds and near the public buildings typically contain the remains of males while those in and near residences more typically are the graves of females. Traditional interpretations of these patterns correlate nonresidential burials associated with mounds and public structures with prestige and power, and they correlate residential burials with domesticity. These models interpret gendered patterns of male burials associated with public and ceremonial spaces, and female burials associated with household dwellings, as evidence for male-dominated social and political hierarchies (Hally 2004, 2008; Hatch 1974, 1976, 1987; Peebles 1974; Peebles and Kus 1977). Our interpretation of these gender distinctions in grave placement is that they reflect alternative pathways to power and status for men and women in different domains of social and political life. This perspective is guided largely by ethnographic and ethnohistoric evidence about gender and leadership within 18th-century Cherokee societies (Corkran 1969; Gearing 1962; Perdue 1998; Persico 1979; Sattler 1995).

The Development of Residential Burial in the Southern Appalachians

As we already noted, the development of residential burial in southern Appalachia followed a long period of burial mound use. By C.E. 600, people in eastern Tennessee were building conical-shaped mounds, but evidence of associated settlements is sketchy for the first three centuries of burial mound use (Schroedl et al. 1990; Sullivan and Koerner 2010). Burial mounds likely were built and maintained by particular lineage groups and may have served as territorial markers (Cole 1975; Schroedl et al. 1990:183).

Platform mounds with structures on them were built near burial mounds possibly as early as C.E. 900 (Schroedl et al. 1990; but see Sullivan et al. 2009) and by C.E. 1200, some burials also were placed in these substructural mounds (Sullivan 2007). Towns, with log stockades surrounding public structures, plazas, and domestic dwellings, developed in conjunction with most platform mounds (Figure 6.2a). Within a century thereafter, the burial mounds fell into disuse and graves were placed in and around residential structures as well as in the platform mounds. The same kind of settlements and architectural styles developed in western North Carolina after C.E. 1300, but the changes in preceding centuries are less clear (Dickens 1976, 1978, 1979; Keel 1976; Ward and Davis 1999).

These changes took place during a period of environmental uncertainties that may have set the stage for migrations into the area from drought-stricken regions farther west in Tennessee (Delcourt and Delcourt 2004; Meeks 2006a, 2006b, 2009). Such migrations would have increased populations and could have led to significant social disruption. Intensification of maize agriculture was also part of this scenario. Claiming space and forming attachments between towns and houses and specific places within the landscape may have been critical to community livelihood during this period and in these conditions.

Of particular significance is the observation that these long-term changes in burial practices, from burial mounds to burials in residential and public space, likely were accompanied by the development of corporate social groups who shared residences and joint property (Beck 2007; Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995; Joyce and Gillespie 2000). Evidence for this type of organization includes the repetitive construction, repair, and replacement of residences in the same places within towns and villages over many years. Furthermore, archaeological town sites dating as early as the late 17th century can be definitely associated with historically known Cherokee groups in the region. Although use of platform mounds had ceased, the typical early Cherokee town

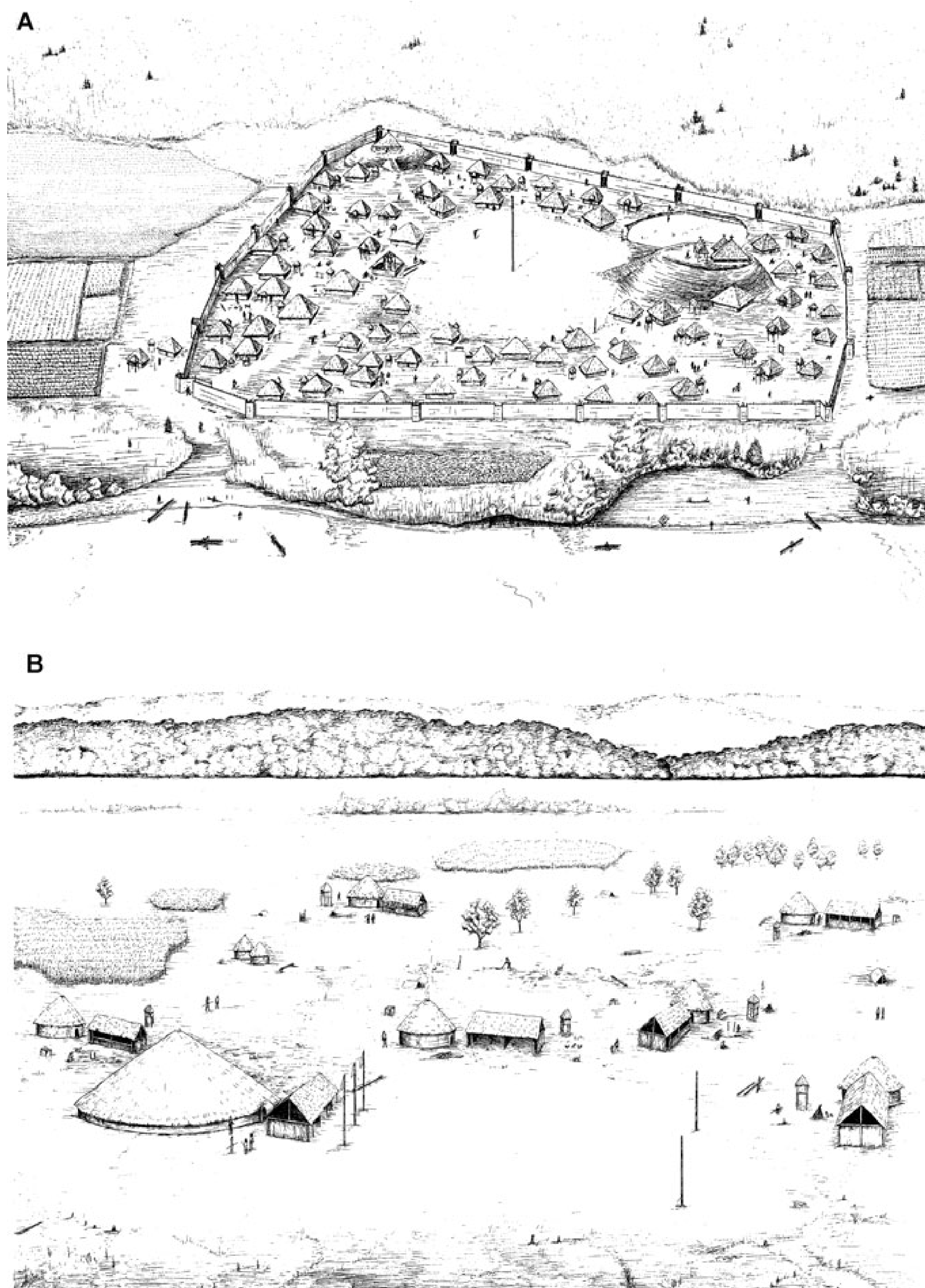


Figure 6.2. Artist's reconstructions of American Indian towns in southern Appalachia. a, Late prehistoric town based on the Toqua site. The smaller buildings near the larger houses were interpreted as corn cribs for this drawing (drawing by Tom Whyte from Polhemus 1987:fig. 13.4). b, Eighteenth-century Cherokee town based on the Chota-Tanasee site (drawing by Tom Whyte from Schroedl 1986:fig. 5.14). (Images courtesy of the Frank H. McClung Museum, The University of Tennessee)

retained the configuration of a central public structure (townhouse) and plaza surrounded by residences (Figure 6.2b). Early Cherokee burial patterns also were similar to those of the late prehistoric groups, with most burials being associated with dwelling houses and some with the townhouse. We can thus trace the development and continued use of residential burial practices in southern Appalachia over some five centuries. In this region, residential burial groupings were created in conjunction with generations of residential groups whose dwellings often occupied the same locations for many decades.

The Contexts of Residential and Nonresidential Burials

The physical contexts of residential and nonresidential burials are quite different. We first describe the physical characteristics of the dwellings and residential burials at late prehistoric through early Cherokee settlements, and then contrast these with the burials and buildings associated with the communal public areas of these settlements. Many late prehistoric and protohistoric domestic and public structures in the southern Appalachian region are analogous to 18th-century Cherokee dwellings and the public structures known as townhouses (Anderson 1994; Faulkner 1978; Polhemus 1990; Rodning 2002, 2007, 2009a; Schroedl 1998, 2000, 2001; Sullivan 1987, 1995). As suggested above, we cannot correlate directly the ethnicity of the prehistoric and protohistoric groups with the Cherokee because of discontinuities in the archaeological and historical records. We do think that at least some or some combination of these groups were ancestral to the Cherokee. Analogies with Cherokee culture therefore are appropriate when warranted by the archaeological evidence and we use these analogies to inform our interpretations of the residential burial patterns at relevant late prehistoric and protohistoric sites.

Typical native residential structures in southern Appalachia included primary dwellings—post-in-ground, woven-walled structures with central clay hearths—and more lightly built structures that likely served as summer shades, kitchens, and storage areas (Dickens 1978; Hally 1994, 2008; Hally and Kelly 1998; Polhemus 1990; Schroedl 1998, 2000, 2001; Sullivan 1995). These two structures often are referenced as "winter" and "summer" houses, following observations of early European explorers (Figure 6.3). Eighteenth-century Cherokee residential structures were similar to the earlier examples, except that the "winter" structures were circular rather than square in plan (Figure 6.4a, b; Schroedl 1986; Sullivan 1995). Anywhere from one to several dozen sets of these residential houses were present within 18th-century Cherokee settlements (Hill 1997; Perdue 1998; Schroedl 2000).

Graves were placed in association with both types of structures. Some graves were placed in the floors of winter houses, while others were in or immediately adjacent to the summer structures (Figure 6.3c, d and Figure 6.4b). In the last case, the graves sometimes were placed in small groupings, forming coherent household cemeteries. Variations exist in the age patterning of individuals interred in and near the two kinds of buildings among sites, and some other aspects of mortuary practices differ across the region. For example, in some areas only infants and young children were interred in the winter house floors while older children and adults were buried in association with summer structures, and in some areas individuals were interred in extended positions while flexed positions were more common elsewhere (Sullivan 1987, 1995). However, the basic pattern of some graves being placed in the floors of the primary residential structures and others being placed in and adjacent to the "summer" houses is consistent from the 14th through 18th centuries throughout the region.

The construction of public, community buildings mimicked that of residences, but on a larger scale (Figures 6.3b, 6.5, and 6.6; Dickens 1978; Hally 1994, 2008; Hally and Kelly 1998; Polhemus 1990; Schroedl 1998, 2000, 2001; Sullivan 1987, 1995). Outdoor plazas usually were maintained in areas beside public buildings (Figure 6.2). In some areas of the Upper Tennessee Valley, prehistoric public buildings were constructed on platform mounds (see Figure 6.2a). In other cases a low mound was created by repeated construction of public buildings in the same location. Graves were placed in the floors of public structures and just outside of them, and sometimes special cemeteries were created adjacent to the plazas. As in some parts of eastern Tennessee, in western North Carolina rebuilding of public buildings in the same locations sometimes created a low mound (Rodning 2002, 2007, 2009a, 2010).

Only those 18th-century Cherokee settlements with large public structures, known as townhouses, were known and named as towns (Schroedl 1998, 2000; Smith 1979). The town to which one belonged was an important aspect of Cherokee identity, and townhouses were the physical embodiment of a Cherokee community. Townhouses formed the hubs of public life (Schroedl 2001) and materialized the identity of a local group of households as a town. The fires kept in townhouse hearths manifested the social and spiritual vitality of towns themselves (Corkran 1969:36; Mooney 1900:396). The townhouse "housed" the community as a

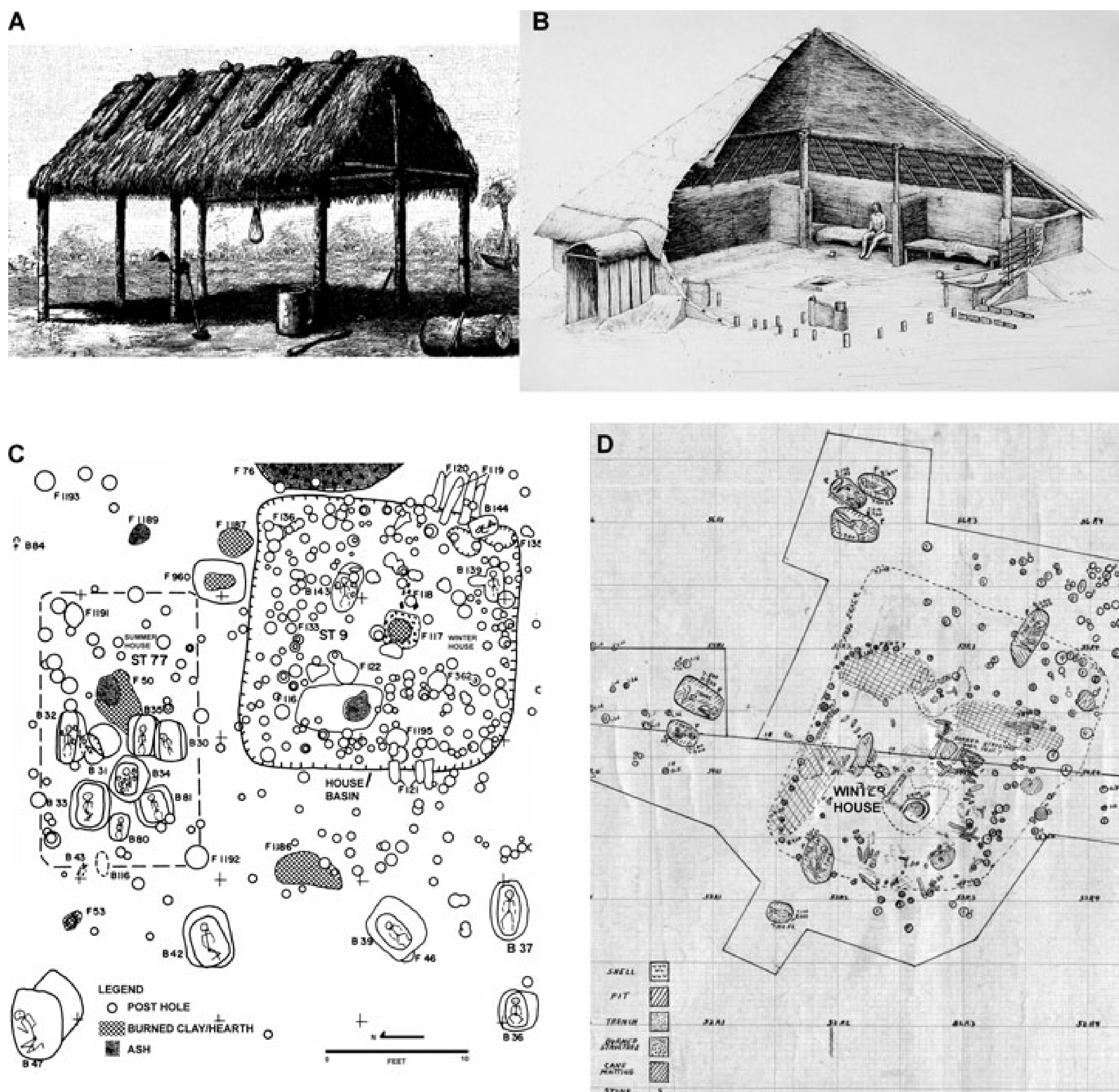
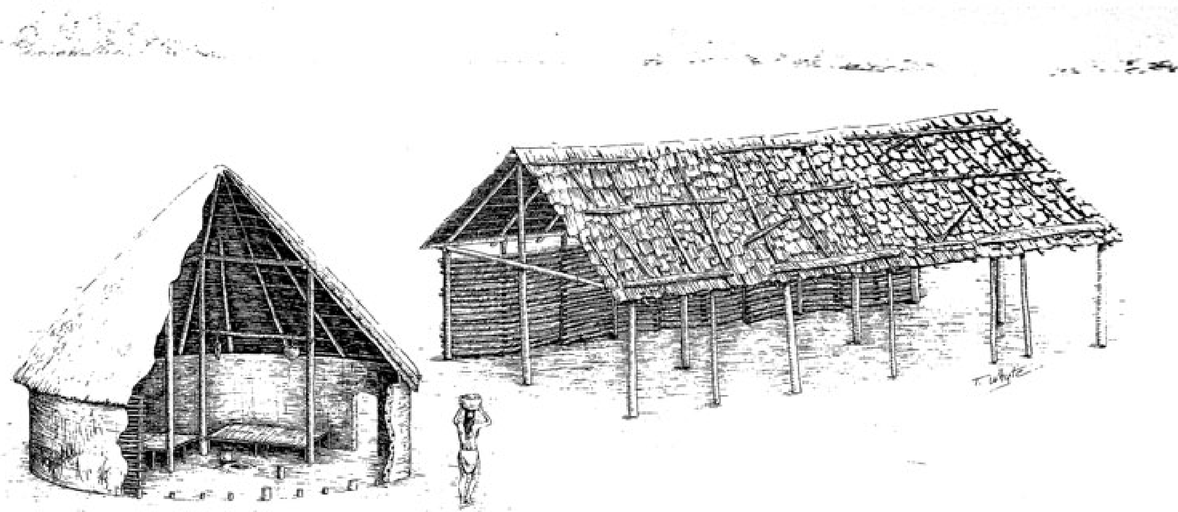


Figure 6.3. Late prehistoric summer and winter houses in southern Appalachia. a, Interpretive illustration of a late prehistoric summer house. This interpretation is derived from a drawing of a Seminole chickee (Swanton 1946:pl. 60), but the southern Appalachian version likely was less formally constructed and was repaired or replaced often, based on the posthole patterns. b, Artist's reconstruction of structure 14 at the Toqua site (drawing by Tom Whyte from Polhemus 1987:fig. 5.32). This particular structure actually was a public building on the mound, but the architecture is identical to that of winter residential houses with the exception that the residential houses were smaller. c, Structure patterns at Toqua showing square winter house and rectangular summer house patterns, and associated burials. Note multiple replacements of exterior wall posts, internal posts denoting partitions or benches, and replacements and relocation of wall-trench entranceways (F119, F120, F121) for the winter house (from Polhemus 1987:fig. 3.14). d, New Deal–era field plat of a winter house pattern at the Dallas site. Summer houses were not recognized by the fieldworkers of this era, but note the burials in the house and the clusters nearby. Indicated grid points on this plat are ten feet apart. (Images b, c, and d are courtesy of the Frank H. McClung Museum, The University of Tennessee)

whole while a domestic dwelling "housed" one of the many households present in a given town. Cherokee townhouses were settings for town council meetings, events related to trade and diplomacy, dances and other rituals, and more casual gatherings of male elders (Corkran 1969; Hill 1997; Williams 1927, 1928, 1930).

Eighteenth-century Cherokee townhouses, like the dwellings, were round as opposed to the earlier, square

A



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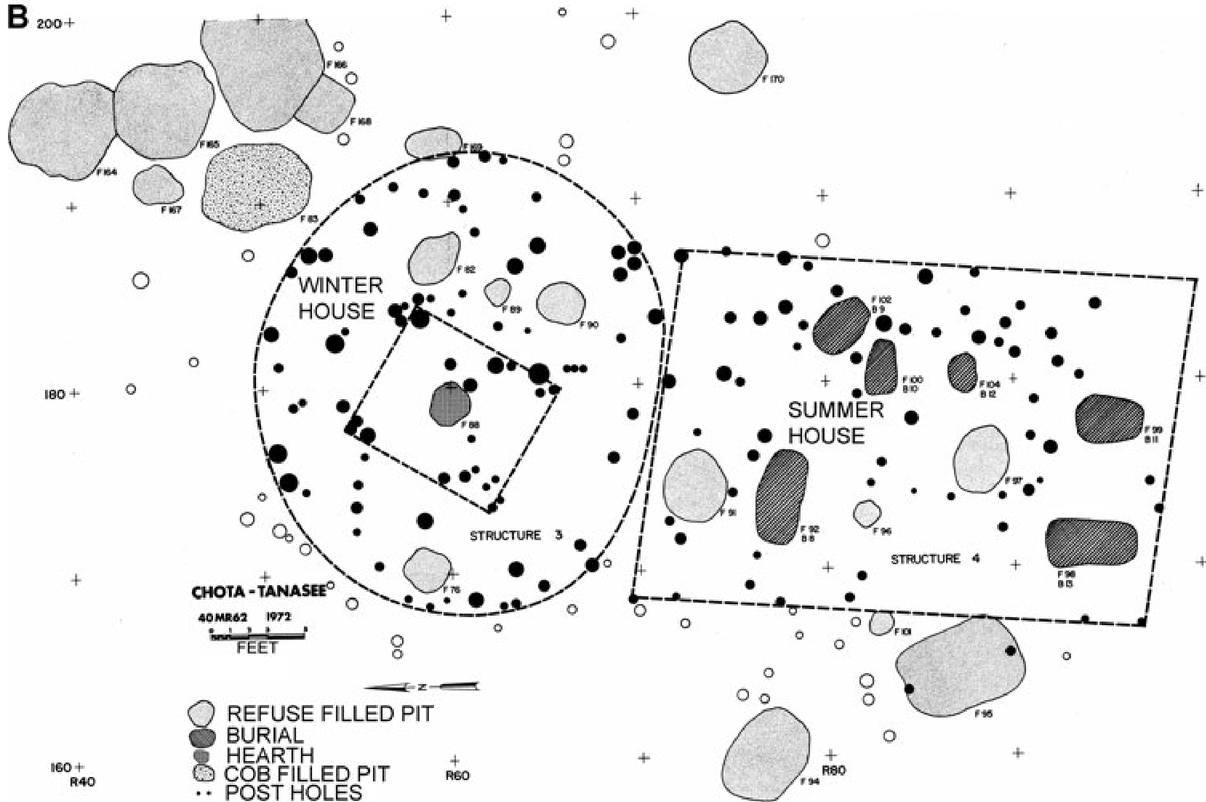

Figure 6.4. Examples of 18th-century summer and winter houses at the Chota-Tanasee site. a, Reconstructions of Cherokee summer and winter houses (drawing by Tom Whyte from Schroedl 1986:fig. 4.45). b, Structure patterns at Chota-Tanasee showing circular winter house and rectangular summer house patterns, and associated burials. The six burials in the floor of the summer house include one adult female, an adolescent male, one unsexed infant, and three unsexed children (Schroedl 1986:263, fig. 4.39). (All images courtesy of the Frank H. McClung Museum, The University of Tennessee)

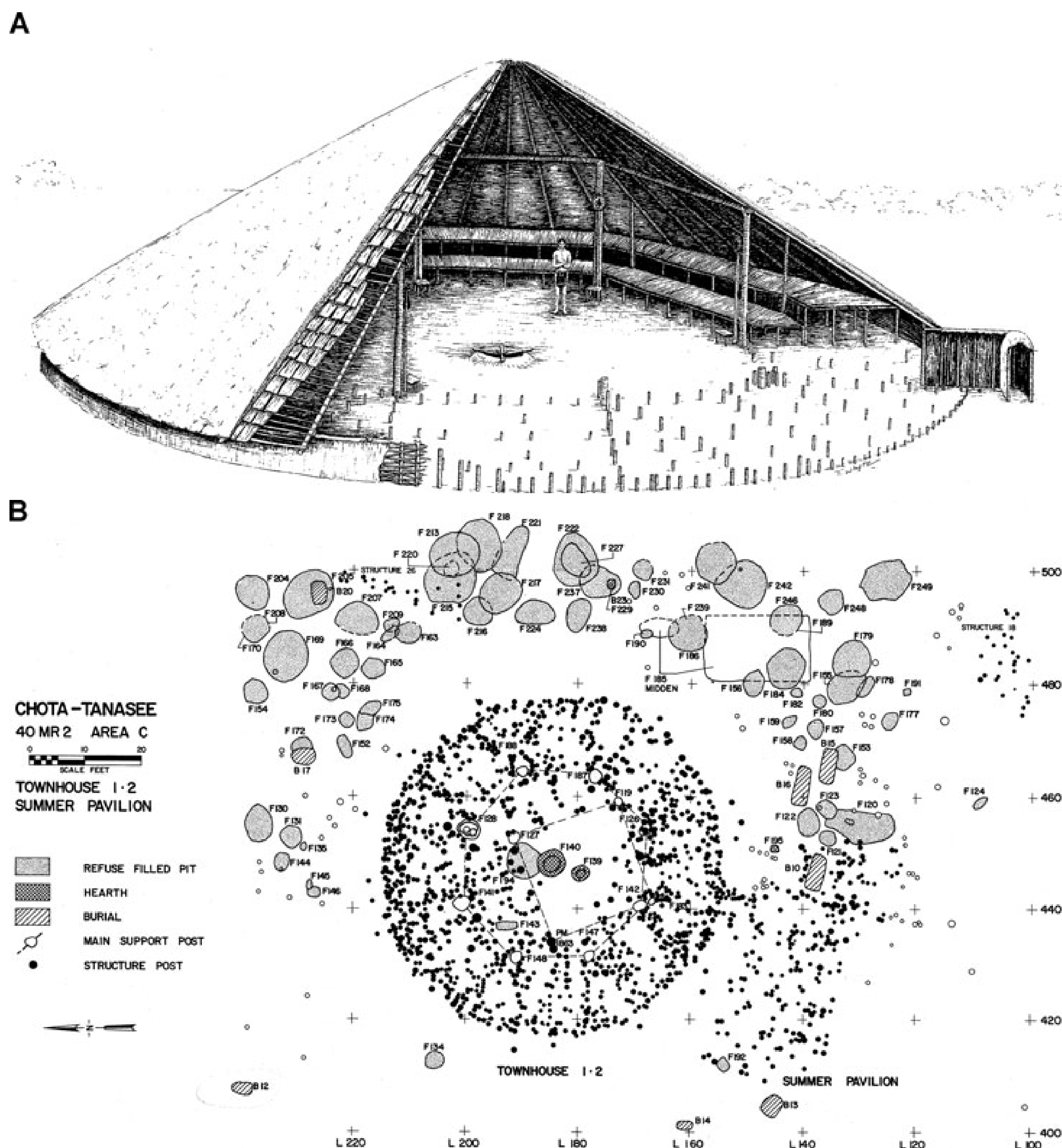

Figure 6.5. The 18th-century Cherokee townhouse at Chota-Tanasee site a, Artist's reconstruction of the townhouse at Chota (drawing by Tom Whyte from Schroedl 1986:fig. 4.43). b, Pattern of a townhouse at Chota, which had been rebuilt. Note the rectangular summer ramada or pavilion to the south of the townhouse entrance. The three burials within this structure all are those of adult males (B10, B15, and B16); B10 was that of Chief Oconostota. Of the two burials immediately to the west, one also is an adult male (B13) and the other was of indeterminate sex and age (B14) (Schroedl 1986:137, 234, fig. 4.2). (Images courtesy of the Frank H. McClung Museum, The University of Tennessee)

buildings (Figure 6.5). Ramadas, pavilions, or sunshades often were situated beside Cherokee townhouses, forming covered areas outside entryways. Some graves were placed just outside townhouse doors, or under or near the ramadas (Figures 6.5b, 6.6, and 6.7).

Gender Traditions and Burial Patterns in Southern Appalachia

Spatial patterns in burial demographics at both Cherokee and prehistoric towns in this region demonstrate

Figure 6.6. Example of a public building or townhouse next to the plaza at the Coweeta Creek site (after Rodning 2009a:642). Note the rectangular ramada, or "summer townhouse," to the southeast of the main building's wall-trench entranceway. This map shows the first of six stages of the Coweeta Creek townhouse, and the density of postholes reflects, in part, the posts and postholes associated with later stages of this structure. The architecture of this building likely was similar to Toqua structure 14 shown in Figure 6.3b.

different gender associations for burials in residential and in public areas. More males typically are buried in association with platform mounds and public buildings than are females, while more female burials typically are associated with residences (Hatch 1974; Peebles 1974; Peebles and Kus 1977; Schroedl 1986; Sullivan 1987). As with the Kayapo settlements discussed above, this patterning initially might seem to suggest dominant and "public" leadership roles for males

Figure 6.7. Coweeta Creek site plan showing locations of adult male and female burials.

and "domestic" roles for females. We suggest that correlations of public buildings with male dominance and leadership, and of female political "marginality," are too simplistic, and that distinctions between "public" and "domestic" social and spatial domains reflect gender duality rather than gender hierarchy (Rodning 2001a; Sullivan 2001, 2006; Sullivan and Rodning 2001). Interpretations of hierarchy likely misrepresent the power and influence of women in these communities and undermine the significance of residential burial. The 18th-century Cherokee traditions that can be correlated with these burial patterns at Chota-Tanasee provide considerable insight to the observed patterns at Coweeta Creek, the 17th-century Cherokee site, as well as at the prehistoric 14th-century Dallas site and the Toqua site with its late prehistoric occupation spanning the 13th to 16th centuries.

According to ethnohistoric sources, Cherokee dwellings were the realms of women (e.g., Corkran 1969:30–32; Perdue 1998). Men did not own houses; rather, inheritance of houses and clan membership were determined

matrilineally, through female lines. Married men lived with their wives' residential groups. In the event of divorce, the husband left the wife's house and returned to the house of his mother or sister. Men with a permanent connection to a household were the brothers and sons of the core female members (Perdue 1998:45). Senior Cherokee women served as clan officers and had considerable authority in these kin groups (Perdue 1998:46; Sattler 1995:222). These women were in charge of families and households, they managed agricultural production, and they derived considerable political power and influence from these realms.

Cherokee women also affected larger community decisions. A number of Cherokee female elders identified as "Beloved Women" or "War Women" are known from early accounts to have been influential leaders (Hatley 1993; Perdue 1998). Although men historically controlled the war organization, Cherokee women could reject men's decisions to go to war (Sattler 1995:222). Hatley (1993:52–63) describes how the clash between the gender traditions of Cherokee and 18th-century European colonial societies led to denigration and ridicule of Cherokee people by the Europeans—even to the point of insulting Cherokee men's masculinity. One English trader commented: "the women rules [*sic*] the roost and wears the breeches and sometimes will beat their husbands within an inch of their lives" (Corkran 1969:30–32). Based on his experiences as an Indian trader in the Southeast in the late 18th century, and referring specifically to relative female freedom in marriage and sexual relations, James Adair referred to a tradition of "petticoat government" in Cherokee towns (Hatley 1993:54; Williams 1930).

In contrast to women's empowerment via management of kindred and residential groups and of agriculture, some Cherokee men were leaders who served as representatives of the entire community and were in charge of intercommunity relationships such as trading and alliances. Each Cherokee town had a history and a set of leaders that differentiated it from others (Gearing 1958, 1962; Gilbert 1943; Goodwin 1977; Persico 1979). Cherokee men also derived prestige via the war organization, an almost exclusively male domain (Gearing 1962). The acquisition of war names and titles was one of the main preoccupations of Southeastern Indian men (Corkran 1969:44–46; Hudson 1976:325; Swanton 1946:696) and some older men successfully negotiated the transition from warriors to community leaders, advisors, and councilors (Gearing 1962). As noted above, the townhouses were where many male-oriented activities occurred, such as events related to trade and diplomacy and more casual gatherings of male elders (Corkran 1969; Hill 1997; Williams 1927, 1928, 1930). As male gathering places, townhouses also were places where men could go to be away from the world of women. Theda Perdue has noted, "Single men often preferred to sleep in the council houses [*sic:* townhouses] rather than in the house of their mothers and sisters" (Perdue 1998:46).

Burial practices at 17th- and 18th-century Cherokee towns follow these gendered statuses and roles. The association between males and public structures is evident in the frequency of adult male burials placed inside and beside the 17th-century townhouse at the Coweeta Creek site in North Carolina (Table 6.1; Figure 6.7; Rodning 1999, 2001a, 2001b) and at the 18th-century Overhill Cherokee settlement at Chota, in Tennessee (Table 6.1; Figure 6.5; Schroedl 1986). All excavated human skeletal remains at these sites were aged and sexed by physical anthropologists at the University of Tennessee and the University of North Carolina during laboratory analyses as reported in Schroedl 1986 and Davis et al. 1996. At Chota, one grave associated with the townhouse is known to be the resting place of Chief Oconostota (Figure 6.5b; King and Olinger 1972).[1] Gerald Schroedl suggests that burial of male elders, known as "Beloved Men," in or associated with the townhouse "would have been appropriate to their standing in Cherokee society" (Schroedl 1986:204).

Most burials in domestic structures at these Cherokee towns are adult women and children (Table 6.1; Figure 6.4b). Except for the male burials associated with the townhouse, other adult males typically were interred in small household cemeteries next to dwellings. Schroedl notes that

> each household was . . . the domain of the wife and her clan-affiliated family members . . . it thus follows that burial in structures might have been restricted to wives and unmarried children . . . adult males whose natal homes would have been elsewhere were likely interred in their village of residence, perhaps in the vicinity of but not within their domiciles. [Schroedl 1986:204]

As discussed in detail above, traditional Cherokee dwellings are places that housed a residential group connected through and identified with women's property, progeny, and power (Perdue 1998). These dwellings were the realms of women, men did not own the houses, inheritance of the houses and clan membership were determined matrilineally, and membership in a clan was a fundamental dimension of Cherokee identity (Gilbert 1943; Perdue 1998). Graves associated with residences also may well reflect an acknowledgment of the ancestors linked to certain residential groups (Schroedl 1986). That is, the graves associated with the households honor the female-linked kin groups associated with these dwellings. In contrast, the graves of men associated with townhouses likely reflect acknowledgment of the interred individuals' participation in community leadership. The placement of burials within and beside such early Cherokee houses and townhouses may have attached

Table 6.1. Sex of Adult Burials by Grave Location and Site

	Grave Location			
	Mound/Public Bldg.		Village/Residential	
Site Name	♀ (%)[a]	♂ (%)	♀ (%)	♂ (%)
Chota[b]	0 (0)	4 (14)	39 (100)	24 (86)
Coweeta Creek[c]	2 (13)	17 (61)	13 (87)	11 (39)
Toqua[d]	20 (27)	33 (44)	55 (73)	42 (56)
Dallas[e]	5 (9)	11 (21)	49 (91)	41 (79)

[a]Percentages based on total number of each sex per individual site.
[b]Data from Schroedl 1986.
[c]Data from Davis et al. 1996.
[d]Data from Parham 1987.
[e]Data from Lewis et al. 1995 with updates from McClung Museum inventories.

the memory of preceding generations of houses and towns to these structures themselves. Both the living and the dead were kept in place through the materiality of houses and townhouses. Emplacement of women and men within the built environment was related to the female-empowered residential and kinship context and the male-empowered townhouse and community context.

If we apply these same concepts to late prehistoric towns of the region, a more nuanced understanding of the spatial patterning of graves becomes apparent. We examined these patterns at two late prehistoric towns in eastern Tennessee, the Toqua and Dallas sites (see Figure 6.1) (Sullivan 2001, 2006; Sullivan and Rodning 2001). These sites were excavated in conjunction with Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) reservoir projects and are now flooded. The Toqua site in the Little Tennessee River valley was a palisaded town with two platform mounds, a central plaza, and a large village area with many domestic houses (Figure 6.2a; Polhemus 1987). It was occupied from the 13th to 16th centuries (Koerner et al. in press; Lengyel et al. 1999). The Dallas site, located on the Tennessee River near present-day Chattanooga, was a similar palisaded town with one small platform mound and a central plaza surrounded by dwellings (Lewis et al. 1995). It was occupied for only about one century, and the entire town was burned down in approximately C.E. 1400 (Sullivan 2007). At both sites, graves were placed in association with the public buildings on the platform mounds, and in and around residences (Figure 6.3c, d). The mounds were entirely excavated at both sites as well as significant portions of the non-mounded village deposits. The Toqua burial sample includes a total of 439 individuals attributable to the late prehistoric occupation, of which 150 adult individuals (≥15 years of age) could be assigned both age and sex. The Dallas site sample includes a total of 279 individuals, of which 106 adults could be aged and sexed. Aging and sexing of the skeletal remains was done through laboratory analysis by University of Tennessee biological anthropologists as reported by Parham (1987) and in Lewis et al. (1995, see xxi for explanation).

The Dallas and Toqua sites also show the typical pattern of more male individuals buried in the mounds and more females buried in residential cemeteries (Table 6.1). More subadults also are in residential graves as opposed to the mounds at Toqua (Parham 1987). This patterning becomes more interesting when we examine specific age cohorts (Sullivan 2006). Figure 6.8 illustrates the patterning of age cohorts by sex and burial location for each site.

The age cohorts shown in Figure 6.8 were assembled using an average age as determined by the physical anthropologists who examined these skeletal remains. For the purposes of the analyses presented below, adult individuals for whom the sex could be determined (estimated age >15 years) were placed into age cohorts consisting of five-year intervals. Those individuals for whom the estimated age ranges, as determined by the physical anthropologists, were more than five years were assigned to the cohorts including the midpoints of the estimated ranges. This procedure undoubtedly misclassified some individuals into age cohorts that are younger or older than their actual (indefinite) ages. The effects of this problem are mitigated because an estimated age range would have to exceed 15 years for an individual to be "misclassified" by more than one cohort, and few estimates exceeded a 15-year range.

In Figure 6.8 each age cohort also is standardized independently to show the percentages of males and females in that cohort who are interred in the mound and "village" (i.e., residential areas). For example, 100 percent of the females in the >40 age cohort are buried in the village at

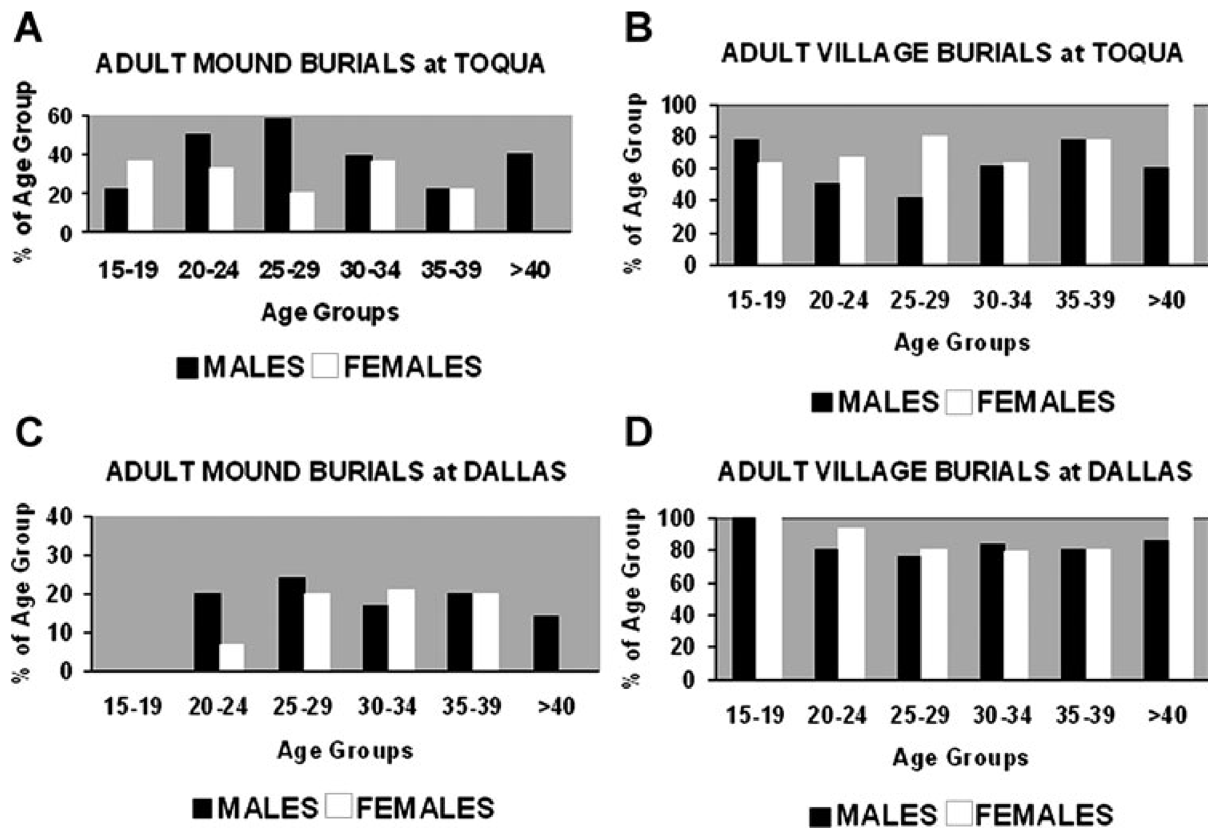

Figure 6.8. Age and sex of adult mound (a, c) and residential (village) (b, d) burials at the late prehistoric Toqua and Dallas sites. Percentages of sexed individuals in each age cohort are shown by burial locations.

both sites. In contrast, small percentages of the males in this age cohort are buried in the mound at each site. This standardization avoids problems posed by archaeological skeletal samples when using simple counts. For example, demographic curves constructed for each site show higher female mortality during the child-bearing years and thus higher than expected numbers of females in younger age categories (Sullivan 2006). By setting the full number of males and females in each cohort at 100 percent, the frequencies of each sex in each location are comparable, regardless of the number of individuals of each sex in the cohort.

Figure 6.8a and c shows that males in the mounds include individuals in all adult age groups, but there are more in the younger age categories (20–29 years). These young males are buried with items that could be associated with warfare, such as ceremonial blades and axes, and clusters of arrow points that likely were quivers of arrows (Hatch 1974, 1987; Polhemus 1987). Some of the oldest men also are buried in the mounds. In contrast, while there are a few younger females in the mounds, as noted above, none of the oldest women are buried in the mounds at either site (Figure 6.8a, c). The oldest females at both sites were, however, interred with more objects than the males of similar age (Sullivan 2001, 2006).

Although there are always problems in relating biological sex to gender to interpret archaeological patterns, in this case we are looking at general patterns and trends that likely follow traditional roles. Judging from the biological patterning, if we were to interpret an individual's prestige and political influence solely by the criterion of mound burial, we would have to conclude that 20-something-year-old males were the most likely group to wield power at these towns and that the eldest women were the least prestigious and influential individuals. This interpretation contradicts cross-cultural research demonstrating that women's prestige and influence often increases with age (Brown and Kerns 1985; Crown and Fish 1996; Eastman 2001), and it suggests that social and political power was entirely in the hands of the "young turks"—another unlikely scenario. Taken together, these trends demonstrate that there was an alternate burial program for women—burial in the village in the location of their houses—as they became older and presumably increasingly responsible for managing households. Mound interment for men is consistent with an increase in prestige

during the younger adult years when males would have been active in the war organization. In fact, it is males of this age group that are the main source of the discrepancy between male and female representation in the mounds. Sullivan (2006) has suggested elsewhere that this difference may have been more pronounced at Toqua because there may have been more instances of conflict, and greater numbers of opportunities for males to achieve war honors and prestige during Toqua's 300-year occupation than during the one century of the Dallas site occupation.

After age 30, there is much less difference in the representation of the sexes in the mounds, with the exception of the very oldest members of the population. The general trend is for women to be less likely candidates for mound burial as they age, but this trend does not correlate with decreased likelihood of being buried with grave offerings (Sullivan 2006). These patterns suggest that residential burial for women does not necessarily correlate with decreased prestige or social standing. In fact, burial in a house may be as much of a material "accoutrement" for a female as are some symbolically charged objects interred with males.

While there are some important differences in the mortuary programs between these sites (see Sullivan 2006 for a more in-depth discussion), there also are sufficient similarities between them, and several reasons to infer that the presence of more men in the public cemeteries does not indicate that men had greater access to prestige and power than did women. First, women *are* represented in the mounds, and in some age cohorts are equally represented with men. Second, younger males of warrior age tip the mound population balance towards men. Third, the oldest females at both sites are not buried in the mounds; they are buried in residences, and some with significant numbers of funerary objects. Based on the Cherokee model and cross-cultural research, these "grandmothers" should have been among the most accomplished, politically influential, and beloved members of these prehistoric communities.

We therefore cannot assume that women had little or no political power simply because their graves are not well represented in mounds and public cemeteries. Nor can we assume that households were "peripheral" or "marginal" to the administration, management, and power structure of these societies. Yet, at another scale of social and political organization, the male burials in platform mounds and in townhouses—which symbolically "housed" entire communities—linked these individuals with the spheres of social life and community leadership associated with those structures.

Residential Burial in the Southern Appalachians

At the sites considered here, including late prehistoric and postcontact towns in the southern Appalachians, residential burial appears to have been an integral part of the negotiation and expression of power relationships among men and women, situated within contextualized realms of political influence and the ancestral heritage of localized residential groups. Not only do the integration and negotiations of significant social and gender divisions characterize the social and political dynamics of these societies, but also the burial practices that associated particular graves with specific kinds of architecture physically inscribed these traditions in the archaeological remains.

The longevity of the tradition of residential burial in this region and its correlation with corporate kin groups in long-term houses also indicates strong links between the realm of the ancestors and that of the living. The placement of burials in household and public spaces connected the dead to the living, and even though the burials themselves were essentially invisible, their association with residential and communal buildings and spaces made the dead "visible" within the built environment of the living community. The longevity of the tradition of residential burial in southern Appalachia also demonstrates cultural conservatism in mortuary practices and, in fact, that conservatism is a significant factor in the formation—over generations—of archaeologically recognizable patterns of graves associated with houses.

The presence of winter and summer houses, and graves associated with them, is also seen at late prehistoric and protohistoric settlements in neighboring regions. Of interest is that the gender dimensions of the burials in these other areas (e.g., northern Georgia) do not necessarily follow those we describe for eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina. For example, burial patterns at the 16th-century King site in northern Georgia, as interpreted by Hally (2004, 2008), suggest more of a male-dominated political structure as opposed to the gender balance we propose for Tennessee and North Carolina. At King, females comprise the majority of residential burials, but are associated with far fewer (typically none) funerary objects than either the males at King or the females at the Tennessee and North Carolina sites, and there are no distinctive burial treatments for elder women at King. Hally (2004, 2008) also interprets all of the burials associated with a large public structure on the plaza at King as high-ranking males. While the similarities in the placements of burials among all of the discussed sites may indicate similar corporate and kinship groupings (clans?), the

differences in gender dimensions may well correlate with either differing cultural identities (ethnicity?[2]) or the interaction of the King site residents with Spanish conquistadors. On the other hand, burials at the King site demonstrate a pattern we also see at sites in western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee: that of burials placed inside domestic and public architecture, as statements about the enduring relationships between those structures and the community members—both the living and the dead—that are "housed" within them (Hally 2008; Rodning 2001a; Sullivan 2001, 2006; Sullivan and Rodning 2001).

The studies in this volume suggest that societies that practice residential burial may have similar organizational features in the form of long-term corporate residences. Our examples from eastern Tennessee and western North Carolina show that other information about important cultural practices can be gleaned from the details of burial demographics and individual treatments—perhaps especially when interment in association with residences is not the only form of burial. Comparisons of such details may reveal significant cultural differences in otherwise similar, and conservative, mortuary practices. The identification of such differences in burial practices among otherwise generally similar, neighboring archaeological complexes may assist in discerning significant distinctions in cultural practices, such as gender dynamics, that may relate to differences in cultural identities.

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Notes

1. The Cherokee burials from Chota-Tanasee and all other sites excavated by the Tellico Archaeological Project were reinterred in the Little Tennessee River valley in the 1980s.

2. See Harle (2010) for an analysis of biological distance as compared with mortuary practices at protohistoric sites in eastern Tennessee and northern Georgia.

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