



# Foraging, Farming, and Coastal Biocultural Adaptation in Late Prehistoric North Carolina

Dale L. Hutchinson

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"A fascinating picture of human adaptation in an area of North America that has been studied primarily by archaeologists . . . [that] provides a new understanding of the responses in health and lifeways in a coastal setting, showing especially the very localized nature of food choices and resource acquisition."--Clark S. Larsen, Ohio State University

"This thoughtful integration of archaeological, historical, ecological, and human bioarchaeological data provides a significant new perspective on the biological costs and benefits of Middle and Late Woodland coastal adaptations in North Carolina. By contrasting inner and outer coastal plain communities in terms of specific features of their dietary regimes, subsistence activities, and patterns of skeletal development and pathology, Hutchinson reveals a breadth of successful adaptive variations hitherto obscured by generalized summaries of Late Prehistoric Native American lifeways in the mid-Atlantic region."--Mary Lucas Powell, University of Kentucky

Dale Hutchinson provides a detailed bioarchaeological analysis exploring human adaptation in the estuary zone of North Carolina and the influence of coastal foraging during the late prehistoric transition to agriculture. He draws on observations of human skeletal remains to look at nutrition, disease, physical activity, morbidity, and mortality of coastal populations, focusing particularly on changes in nutrition and health associated with the move from foraging to farming.

Hutchinson confronts the prevailing notion of a universal agricultural transition by documenting a more variable and complex process of change. Among his notable findings is that skeletal and dental markers long accepted as indicators of corn consumption in fact occur more frequently among coastal foragers than among interior agriculturalists. His research shows that men and women differed not only in their economic roles but in their diets as well, and that outer coastal populations continued to rely on maritime resources without the adoption of corn after A.D. 800, a reliance that almost surely influenced their evolving lifestyle.

None of the data in the book has been published previously, and Hutchinson is generous with tables, figures, and appendixes that contribute significantly to the clarity of his interpretations. The combination of original data, well-supported interpretation, and the breadth of evidence from many categories significantly advances our anthropological understanding of the lives of these first North Carolinians.

Dale L. Hutchinson is associate professor of anthropology at East Carolina University.



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