

International Handbook of Historical Archaeology

Teresita Majewski · David Gaimster
Editors

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 Springer

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Teresita Majewski
Statistical Research, Inc.
P. O. Box 31865
Tucson, AZ 85751-1865
USA
tmajewski@sricrm.com

David Gaimster
Society of Antiquaries of London
Burlington House
London
Piccadilly
W1J 0BE, UK
dgaimster@sal.org.uk

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Dedicated to the memories of my parents, Thelma F. Majewski (1906–1996) and Bernard L. Majewski (1895–1967), whose spoken and unspoken life lessons have been invaluable for me.

Teresita Majewski

Dedicated to the memory of Rev. Leslie R. Gaimster (1914–2002) for all his encouragement and inspiration.

David Gaimster

Contents

| | |
|---|------|
| Contributors | xi |
| Acknowledgments | xv |
| Introduction | xvii |
| David Gaimster and Teresita Majewski | |
| Part I Themes, Issues, and Approaches | |
| 1 A North American Perspective on Race and Class in Historical Archaeology | 3 |
| Jamie C. Brandon | |
| 2 Ethical Issues in Historical Archaeology | 17 |
| Mary C. Beaudry | |
| 3 Colonies, Colonialism, and Cultural Entanglement: The Archaeology of Postcolumbian Intercultural Relations | 31 |
| Kurt A. Jordan | |
| 4 Landscape Approaches in Historical Archaeology: The Archaeology of Places | 51 |
| Nicole Branton | |
| 5 Historical Archaeology and the Environment: A North American Perspective | 67 |
| Donald L. Hardesty | |
| 6 An Update on Zooarchaeology and Historical Archaeology: Progress and Prospects | 77 |
| David B. Landon | |
| 7 Going, Going, Gone: Underwater Cultural Resources in Decline | 105 |
| Donald H. Keith and Toni L. Carrell | |
| 8 Preparing for an Afterlife on Earth: The Transformation of Mortuary Behavior in Nineteenth-Century North America | 141 |
| Charles H. LeeDecker | |

| | | |
|---|--|-----|
| 9 | Making Historical Archaeology Postcolonial | 159 |
| | Mark P. Leone | |
| 10 | The Current State and Future Prospects of Theory in European Post-Medieval Archaeology | 169 |
| | Paul Courtney | |
| 11 | Beyond Consumption: Toward an Archaeology of Consumerism | 191 |
| | Teresita Majewski and Michael Brian Schiffer | |
| 12 | Artifacts and Personal Identity | 209 |
| | Carolyn L. White and Mary C. Beaudry | |
| 13 | Darwinism and Historical Archaeology | 227 |
| | Michael J. O'Brien and R. Lee Lyman | |
| 14 | World-Systems Theory, Networks, and Modern-World Archaeology | 253 |
| | Charles E. Orser, Jr. | |
| 15 | Wholes, Halves, and Vacant Quarters: Ethnohistory and the Historical Method | 269 |
| | Paul R. Picha | |
| 16 | Industrial Archaeology | 285 |
| | Patrick E. Martin | |
| 17 | Studying the Archaeology of War: A Model Based on the Investigation of Frontier Military Sites in the American Trans-Mississippi West | 299 |
| | Douglas D. Scott | |
| 18 | Men–Women and Children: Gender and the Structuring of Historical Archaeology | 319 |
| | Andrea C. Vermeer | |
| 19 | Interpretive Historical Archaeologies | 333 |
| | Laurie A. Wilkie | |
| 20 | Asian American Studies in Historical Archaeology | 347 |
| | Edward Staski | |
| Part II Historical Archaeology on a Global Scale | | |
| 21 | Family Resemblances: A Brief Overview of History, Anthropology, and Historical Archaeology in the United States | 363 |
| | Barbara J. Little | |
| 22 | The Archaeology of La Florida | 383 |
| | Charles R. Ewen | |
| 23 | Historical Archaeology in South America | 399 |
| | Pedro Funari, Andrés Zarankin, and Melisa A. Salerno | |

| | | |
|-----------|--|-----|
| 24 | Historical Archaeology in Central and Northern Mesoamerica: Development and Current Status | 409 |
| | Thomas H. Charlton, Patricia Fournier, and Cynthia L. Otis Charlton | |
| 25 | Historical Archaeology in Yucatan and Central America | 429 |
| | William R. Fowler | |
| 26 | Archaeologies of the African Diaspora: Brazil, Cuba, and the United States | 449 |
| | Theresa Singleton and Marcos André Torres de Souza | |
| 27 | On the Fringes of New Spain: The Northern Borderlands and the Pacific | 471 |
| | Russell K. Skowronek | |
| 28 | Exploration, Exploitation, Expansion, and Settlement: Historical Archaeology in Canada | 507 |
| | Dena Doroszenko | |
| 29 | An Embarrassment of Riches? Post-Medieval Archaeology in Northern and Central Europe | 525 |
| | David Gaimster | |
| 30 | The Development of Post-Medieval Archaeology in Britain: A Historical Perspective | 549 |
| | Geoff Egan | |
| 31 | The Practice and Substance of Historical Archaeology in Sub-Saharan Africa | 565 |
| | Natalie Swanepoel | |
| 32 | A Sea of Diversity: Historical Archaeology in the Caribbean | 583 |
| | Douglas V. Armstrong and Mark W. Hauser | |
| 33 | French Colonial Archaeology | 613 |
| | Gregory A. Waselkov | |
| 34 | Natives and Newcomers in the Antipodes: Historical Archaeology in Australia and New Zealand | 629 |
| | Susan Lawrence and Peter Davies | |
| 35 | Above and Beyond Ancient Mounds: The Archaeology of the Modern Periods in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean | 647 |
| | Uzi Baram | |
| | Index | 663 |

Contributors

Douglas V. Armstrong Anthropology Department, Maxwell School, Syracuse University, 209 Maxwell Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244-1090, USA, e-mail: darmstrong@maxwell.syr.edu

Uzi Baram Division of Social Sciences, New College of Florida, 5800 Bay Shore Road, Sarasota, FL 34243-2109, USA, e-mail: baram@ncf.edu

Mary C. Beaudry Department of Archaeology, Boston University, 675 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, MA 02215-1406, USA, e-mail: beaudry@bu.edu

Jamie C. Brandon Arkansas Archeological Survey & Southern Arkansas University, P. O. Box 9381, Magnolia, AR 71754-9381, USA, e-mail: jbrando@uark.edu

Nicole Branton Arapajo and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland, 2150 Centre Ave., Bldg. E, Fort Collins, CO 805Z6, USA, e-mail: nbranton@fs.fed.us

Toni L. Carrell Ships of Discovery, 1900 N. Chaparral Street, Corpus Christi, TX 78401, USA, e-mail: tcarrell@shipsofdiscovery.org

Thomas H. Charlton Department of Anthropology MH 114, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242-1322, USA, e-mail: thomas-charlton@uiowa.edu

Paul Courtney 20 Lytton Road, Leicester, LE2 1WJ, UK, e-mail: paul.courtney2@ntlworld.com

Peter Davies Archaeology Program, La Trobe University, Martin Building 164, Victoria, Australia, e-mail: peter.davies@latrobe.edu.au

Dena Doroszenko Ontario Heritage Trust, 10 Adelaide St. E., Toronto, ON M5C 1J3, Canada, e-mail: dena.doroszenko@heritagetrust.on.ca

Geoff Egan Museum of London Specialist Services, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED, UK, e-mail: geggan@museumoflondon.org.uk

Charles R. Ewen Department of Anthropology, East Carolina University, 267 Flanagan Building, Greenville, NC 27858, USA, e-mail: ewenc@ecu.edu

Patricia Fournier División de Posgrado, Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia, A.P. 86-098, México D.F. 14391, México, e-mail: pfournier.enah@inah.gob.mx

William R. Fowler Department of Anthropology, Vanderbilt University, Box 6050-B, Nashville, TN 37235, USA, e-mail: william.r.fowler@vanderbilt.edu

Pedro Funari Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, Buenos Aires, Argentina, e-mail: ppfunari@uol.com.br

David Gaimster Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London W1J 0BE, UK, e-mail: dgaimster@sal.org.uk

Donald L. Hardesty Department of Anthropology, University of Nevada, Reno, NV 89557, USA, e-mail: hardesty@unr.edu

Mark W. Hauser Africana Studies, University of Notre Dame, 327 O'Shaughnessy Hall, Notre Dame, IN 46556, USA, e-mail: mhauser1@nd.edu

Kurt A. Jordan Department of Anthropology and American Indian Program, 210 McGraw Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853, USA, e-mail: kj21@cornell.edu

Donald H. Keith Ships of Discovery, 1900 N. Chaparral Street, Corpus Christi, TX 78401, USA, e-mail: dhkeith@shipsofdiscovery.org

David B. Landon Andrew Fiske Memorial Center for Archaeological Research, Department of Anthropology, University of Massachusetts, 100 Morrissey Boulevard, Boston, MA 02125, USA, e-mail: david.landon@umb.edu

Susan Lawrence Archaeology Program, La Trobe University, Martin Building 164, Victoria, Australia, e-mail: s.lawrence@latrobe.edu.au

Charles H. LeeDecker The Louis Berger Group, Inc., 2445 M Street, NW, NW #400, Washington, DC 20037-1845, USA, e-mail: cleedecker@louisberger.com

Mark P. Leone Department of Anthropology, 1111 Woods Hall, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, USA, e-mail: mleone@anth.umd.edu

Barbara J. Little Department of Anthropology, 1111 Woods Hall, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742, USA, e-mail: blittle@umd.edu

R. Lee Lyman Department of Anthropology, 107 Swallow Hall, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211-1440, USA, e-mail: lymanr@missouri.edu

Teresita Majewski Statistical Research, Inc., 6099 East Speedway Blvd., Tucson, AZ 85712, USA, e-mail: tmajewski@sricrm.com

Patrick E. Martin Department of Social Sciences, Michigan Technological University, Houghton, MI 49931, USA, e-mail: pemartin@mtu.edu

Michael J. O'Brien Department of Anthropology, University of Missouri, Arts and Science Dean's Office, 317 Lowry Hall, Columbia, MO 65211-6080, USA, e-mail: obrienm@missouri.edu

Charles E. Orser, Jr. New York State Museum, Research and Collections, 3140 Cultural Education Center, Albany, NY 12230, USA, e-mail: corser@mail.nysed.gov

Cynthia L. Otis Charlton 1381 Fir Ave., Wellman, IA 52356-9791, USA, e-mail: cyncharl@netins.net

Paul R. Picha State Historical Society of North Dakota, Historic Preservation Division, 612 E. Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck, ND 58505-0830, USA, e-mail: ppicha@nd.gov

Melisa A. Salerno Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas, Buenos Aires, Argentina, e-mail: melisa_salerno@yahoo.com.ar

Michael Brian Schiffer Department of Anthropology, University of Arizona, 1009 E. South Campus Drive, Tucson, AZ 85721-0030, USA, e-mail: schiffer@u.arizona.edu

Douglas D. Scott Department of Anthropology and Geography, University of Nebraska, 941 Oldfather Hall, Lincoln, NE 68588, USA, e-mail: dougscott@aol.com

Theresa Singleton Department of Anthropology, Maxwell School, Syracuse University, 209 Maxwell Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244-1090, USA, e-mail: tasingle@maxwell.syr.edu

Russell K. Skowronek Department of Anthropology, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA 95053, USA, e-mail: rskowronek@scu.edu

Edward Staski Department of Sociology and Anthropology, New Mexico State University, Box 3BV, Las Cruces, NM 88003, USA, e-mail: estaski@nmsu.edu

Marcos André Torres de Souza Department of Anthropology, Maxwell School, Syracuse University, 209 Maxwell Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244-1090, USA, e-mail: masouza@maxwell.syr.edu

Natalie Swanepoel Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, University of South Africa, P.O. Box 392, Pretoria, UNISA 0003, South Africa, e-mail: swanenj@unisa.ac.za

Andrea C. Vermeer Summit EnviroSolutions, Inc., 1217 Bandana Boulevard North, St. Paul, MN 55108, USA, e-mail: avermeer@summite.com

Gregory A. Waselkov Center for Archaeological Studies, University of South Alabama, HUMB 34, 307 N. University Blvd., Mobile, AL 36688, USA, e-mail: gwaselkov@jaguar1.usouthal.edu

Carolyn L. White Department of Anthropology, University of Nevada, Reno, 1664 N. Virginia St., Reno, NV 89557, USA, e-mail: clwhite@unr.edu

Laurie A. Wilkie Department of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley, 232 Kroeber Hall, Berkeley, CA 94720, USA, e-mail: lawilkie@berkeley.edu

Andrés Zarankin Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte, Brazil, e-mail: zarankin@yahoo.com

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Introduction

David Gaimster and Teresita Majewski

“Historical archaeology” is one of the most fast-changing and dynamic fields of study in the archaeological discipline. This collection of essays by researchers and practitioners from around the world charts the field’s progress since its inception half century ago on a European colonial sites along the Atlantic seaboard of North America to the emergence of a truly global inquiry into the making of modern society. The 35 reviews and case studies in this compendium provide a wide-ranging snapshot of the subject today, which is breaking boundaries on many different levels, from geographical and temporal to methodological and theoretical. After 50 years, this first handbook for the discipline reveals the arrival at the beginning of the twenty-first century of a maturing and distinctive interdisciplinary study of historical material culture spanning societies and communities in almost every corner of the globe.

This handbook does not deal only with the archaeology of literate societies, as some have previously defined “historical archaeology.” Such a definition is both too narrow and too broad for us to apply to the material study of most past and indeed contemporary societies around the world. Besides, historical archaeology is a vehicle for exploring those communities that had no access to writing and that leave no conventional documentary record of their experiences, however significant. In contrast to prehistorians, the greatest challenge for historical archaeologists is to make sense of the vast quantities and the sheer diversity of the documentary and material remains of historical societies. The aim of the handbook, therefore, takes the now widely acknowledged definition of world historical archaeology as its main focus, as put forward by Charles E. Orser, Jr., in various publications (e.g., Orser, 2002). The papers collected here reveal current and diverse approaches to the archaeology of those societies developing in the wake of the European Middle Ages (where the Reformation, mercantile capitalism, and industrialization all ruptured the previous order of things) and of those emerging in regions of the world that were colonized by Europeans and that developed along a new multiethnic trajectory. This handbook is devoted therefore to the Postcolumbian or post-Quincentennial archaeology of Europe and the world, or should we say Europe *in* the world. While accepting the Eurocentricity or transatlantic emphasis of this “archaeology of cultural entanglement,” many of the contributors to the handbook also contest it. Several demonstrate how the boundaries of this emerging discipline are being pushed back still further to accommodate those societies that were not touched significantly by European expansion or those that enjoyed long-distance interactions outside of European networks.

The acceptance of the term “historical archaeology” has ironically been more problematic for Europeans, who have found difficulties in drawing clear boundaries between the medieval, post-medieval, and contemporary worlds. In Britain, the discipline of “post-medieval archaeology,” which was institutionalized in the formation of the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology in 1966, has traditionally taken the mid-fifteenth century as its starting point and the mid-eighteenth century as its terminus. Since the 1960s, the periodization debate has swung one way and then the other. More recently, thanks to a series of major conferences on the medieval to early modern transition, industrialization, and the archaeology of the Reformation, a temporally less constrained view of post-medieval archaeology has emerged, one that recognizes the primacy of archaeological chronology and diverse aspects of change and continuity between the late Middle Ages and the present day. A growing interest in the archaeology of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, an increasing focus on historical issues and themes, and the identification of synergies between the “historical” and the “contemporary” or “familiar past” have all helped to obscure the boundaries between the past, the present, and the archaeological record. Perhaps the term “post-medieval archaeology” now does an injustice to an expanding and increasingly pluralistic discipline in British and European archaeology, which can no longer define itself in terms of reference to another period in European history. In contrast, the term “historical archaeology” better accommodates all the pulses and new directions of the study of modern European society and its material culture.

Where once there were divided methods of operation, with Europeans working in a historical tradition and Americans largely influenced by anthropology, historical archaeology has become today both anthropological *and* historical, one common point of interest being the point of accord or tension between artifacts and texts. Now operating in a predominantly anthropological interpretive framework, the focus of most current practitioners is the interrogation of past human behavior and the identification of traits in that behavior that are indicative of the emergence of modern society. To achieve this, historical archaeologists are active in all the varied specializations of modern archaeology, from landscape mapping, buildings recording, and the maritime sphere to artifact analysis, materials science, funerary studies, and forensics. Given the nature of the diverse evidence available, they are forced to work at a level of interdisciplinarity rare in other fields of archaeology or historical investigation. The growth of cultural resource management, or heritage management, throughout the world has provided a major impetus for this trend. Historical archaeologists also possess that vital flexibility to operate at the macro- and micro-scales of world and local history, from the broad, international sweep, to the household and the personal sphere. Moreover, they are able to place a local discovery into a world matrix of colonialism, capitalism, imperialism, and the like. The discipline, as these studies capture, is one that is able to offer a material perspective on key historical questions, definitions, and issues of the modern world through the investigation of sites, monuments, objects, and landscapes.

The plurality or hybridism of world historical archaeology can be observed in this collection of 35 essays by leading authorities in their respective fields. Together they provide a snapshot of the two emerging cultures of “historical archaeology,” as identified recently by Dan Hicks and Mary Beaudry (2006), those being a materials-based science and an interpretive, theoretical field

concerned with meaning. The chapters certainly combine material and “non-material” concerns, and all address the broader historical narratives of the post-Quincentennial era. At times, researchers are inspired by the critical voices of other archaeological practitioners or by the public. Project stakeholders often challenge us to examine and question our assumptions and free us up to try something innovative. Since the subject matter of the discipline spans so much of the recent or even “familiar” past, several also consider the growing threat to historical archaeological resources around the world from development and industrialization, particularly in developing nations and under the sea (where in international waters there is no effective protection from commercial salvage). But even in the developed world, protective legislation is often weaker in relation to historical archaeological sites, landscapes, and artifacts, and rarely enforced. This handbook attempts for the first time to map those resources and their potential for local economic sustainability before they are lost forever.

The handbook is a game of two halves. The first half contains 20 essays addressing past and current approaches together with a comprehensive set of dedicated discussions of key interpretive issues in world historical archaeology. The key approaches and subfields of world historical archaeology are addressed, from landscape, environmental, forensic, maritime, and industrial archaeology, to ethnohistory, frontier sites, artifact analysis, and mortuary studies. The interpretive essays address all the defining traits of modern society and its material expression, from class, race, gender, and identity, to colonialism and postcolonialism, consumerism, and theory in historical archaeology. The second half of the handbook contains 15 complementary case studies dedicated to the emergence and current practice of historical archaeology across the globe. Contributions range from synoptic treatments of national historical archaeologies in the United States, South America, Mesoamerica, Central America, New Spain in North America and the Pacific, Canada, northern Europe, Britain, sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, the French colonial sphere, the African Diaspora in North and South America, Australasia, and the Ottoman Empire to studies of key regions of world importance for the subject, such as La Florida. Each contribution carries an extensive bibliography designed to equip the undergraduate, postgraduate, practicing archaeologist, and interested reader from complementary disciplines with key reference information on each subject.

The bias in the nationality of the handbook’s authors reflects, to a degree, the current geographical strengths and weaknesses of the field. The handbook has its origin in the United States, where both its original editors were located. It follows that of the 45 authors represented in the volume, 34 are based in the United States. In addition to these, 3 authors are based in the United Kingdom, while 4 are based in Latin America, 1 in Canada, 1 in South Africa, and 2 in Australia. Of the 12 geographical case studies on historical archaeology outside the United States, scholars based at American universities provide 6 of that number. Besides the absence of local contributors on key regions where historical archaeology has grown in importance in recent years, the geographical gaps in the volume are equally illuminating. Perhaps the transatlantic Postcolumbian paradigm is an inappropriate framework for Asian or Far Eastern archaeologists! Here, independent long-distance commercial and cultural exchanges preceded and continued long after initial contact with Europeans. Should this project be undertaken again in the decade or so, it will be instructive to observe how far the notion of

historical archaeology has been taken up in those parts of the world that are touched on only relatively marginally in this volume. A revised handbook should contain a significantly greater number of contributions on sub-Saharan Africa, for instance. It is the belief of both editors that as the history of the colonial experience and of the forging of new nations becomes increasingly important to national identity in the next few decades, the historical archaeology of those regions will also grow in its relevance.

The handbook is a child of the mid-1990s and has taken over 10 years in gestation. In such a large compendium, the content has been prepared and collated in a series of phases, some inevitably a while ago while other contributions have the benefit of being prepared only a short time before publication. As a first attempt at bringing so much knowledge together, the end result is no less useful for that.

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Part I
Themes, Issues, and Approaches

A North American Perspective on Race and Class in Historical Archaeology

Jamie C. Brandon

Introduction

When Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast in August of 2005, it became one of the most costly and deadly storms in American history. It also, although briefly, highlighted the often muted importance of inequality in our society and started a discussion about race and class in the American mainstream media. An analysis of damage data shows that the storm's impact was disproportionately borne by the region's African American communities, by people who rented their homes, and by the poor and unemployed (Logan, 2006). "It takes a hurricane," wrote senior editor and *Newsweek* columnist Jonathan Alter:

It takes a catastrophe like Katrina to strip away the old evasions, hypocrisies and not-so-benign neglect. It takes the sight of the United States with a big black eye—visible around the world—to help the rest of us begin to see again. For the moment, at least, Americans are ready to fix their restless gaze on enduring problems of poverty, race and class that have escaped their attention (Alter, 2005:42).

In academia, however, race and class have become two of the largest, and arguably two of the most important, categories of analysis used by every discipline in the social sciences and humanities. As a part of the so-called "triplet" of race, class, and gender, these categories are seen as attributes of individual and group identity as well as concepts that are central to modernity, with its unequal access to power. This linkage of racial and class-based classifications with the modern world, however, is not meant to imply that inequality did not occur in premodern times

(Gosden, 2006; Orser, 2004:5), but that the structure and content of the modern ideas of race and class are qualitatively different and inextricably tied to Western capitalist ideology (Geremek, 1997:109; Hartigan, 2005:33–42; Smedley, 1999:18–20).

From the nineteenth century to the present, scholars have been arguing the relative importance of these analytical registers. Some researchers have claimed a privileged position for race by pointing out that class barriers can be transcended while racial barriers cannot (e.g., Smedley, 1999:221), and recently anthropologists such as Faye Harrison (1998) and Kamala Visweswarn (1998) have asserted that race and racism needs to be the central focus of our discipline. Many other researchers, largely working within the Marxist tradition, have argued that race falsely divides the working class or, even further, that white working-class subjectivity was predicated on racism (e.g., Roediger, 1991:13). In contrast, a few scholars have claimed that the old, modern ideas of "race" and "class" are no longer useful in a postmodern world (e.g., Gilroy, 2000; Pakulski and Waters, 1996).

Recently, however, even many Marxist theoreticians are beginning to explore the ways that the relationship between race and class has been undertheorized—refusing to reduce race to class and vice versa (Williams, 1995:301). At the same time there have been calls for anthropologists and archaeologists to begin to examine the intersections of several social phenomena, rather than fixating on the primacy of one (e.g., DiLeonardo, 1998:22; Franklin, 2001; see also Brandon, 2004a). This approach allows us to understand the subtle, yet important interplay between these phenomena. For instance, racial identities varied significantly over time, between

J.C. Brandon e-mail: jbrando@uark.edu

classes, and across regions, but by the nineteenth century, *race* was a central feature of American *class* identity on both sides of the color line (Mullins, 1999a:22; Roediger, 1991).

Over the last decade, several scholars have argued that historical archaeology is in a unique position to shed light on the nature of these categories (e.g., Deetz, 1996; Jones, 1997:27; McGuire, 1982:161; Orser, 2001:1; Wurst and Fitts, 1999). In fact, it has been suggested that we may bear more *responsibility* for their investigation because of our focus on the modern world and our interest in voices that are unrepresented in the historical record (Orser, 2004:8).

Of course, attempting to synthesize archaeological approaches to class *or* race in a chapter-length treatment is a substantial undertaking—much less attempting an overview of our discipline’s approaches to both class *and* race. Fortunately, several recent works have provided us with solid, detailed examinations of race (Orser, 1999, 2001, 2004) and class (Wurst, 2006; Wurst and Fitts, 1999) as historical archaeologists have employed these concepts. In light of these works, and the many others that have taken race and/or class as their subject matter, I intend to provide a discussion of how these two analytical registers *relate to each other*, primarily focusing on work that has been conducted in North America. That is, I intend to appraise how historical archaeologists have attempted to parse race *and* class in their work and the implications of the methods that they have employed in their investigations.

Roots of Class and Racial Analysis in Historical Archaeology

The archaeologies of race and class have their beginnings at a similar point in time in North America—the late 1960s. It is not that archaeology had not previously been conducted on sites that were of interest due to the race or class of the occupants (e.g., Bullen and Bullen, 1945), but these categories were not the *analytical focus* of the archaeologists who were conducting the excavations. This changed in the 1960s, when “the civil rights movement, the war in Vietnam, and other factors combined to cause archaeologists, and most social scientists, to reevaluate the social relevance of their fields” (Orser,

1988a:10). These factors caused many archaeologists to become dissatisfied with the seemingly atheoretical products of pre-1960s archaeology and the newer approaches that “emphasized ecological factors and cultural adaptation at the expense of social dialectics and conflict” (Matthews et al., 2002:110).

Robert Ascher, Charles Fairbanks, and James Deetz (Ascher, 1974; Ascher and Fairbanks, 1971; Deetz, 1977; Fairbanks, 1974) provided some of the earliest examples of scholarship that approached sites with what Singleton (1999:1) has called a “moral mission: to tell the story of Americans—poor, powerless and ‘inarticulate’—who had been forgotten in the written record.”

Despite this newfound dedication to a more social archaeology, race and class have remained what Wurst (1999:7) has referred to as “ghost concepts” in the field of historical archaeology until relatively recently. Serious archaeological investigations into race only date to the 1990s, and class remains an underutilized analytical register—even by archaeologists focusing on capitalism and inequality (Orser, 2004:81; Wurst, 2006). Both concepts have often been subsumed under a host of topical archaeologies that, although fruitful in other ways, served to decenter these registers while focusing on broader phenomena—plantation archaeology, archaeologies of inequality, dominance and resistance, ideology, the archaeology of capitalism, and the archaeology of the African Diaspora.

Below we will briefly examine the history of the archaeological approaches to race and class. Although this discussion is presented chronologically, the reader should keep in mind that I am not proposing a progressive evolution of theoretical deployment (i.e., many early theoretical models are still used in some contexts by researchers today). Additionally, I must point out that my own work deals with the American South and the archaeology of African American life in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thus, although I have attempted to broaden my discussions to include larger theoretical debates, I feel that a bias toward my own “comfort zone” is clearly evident.

A Note on Terminology: Race, Class, and Ethnicity

The late 1970s and early 1980s provide us with the earliest works in historical archaeology that specifically

use race, ethnicity, and class as analytical registers. One of the first major published works to address the intersection of race and class was *Archaeological Perspectives on Ethnicity in America: Afro-American and Asian American Culture History* (Schuyler, 1980). This volume consisted of 14 essays that provided a variety of historical treatments that focused discursively on ethnicity, although many essays reveal the complex relationship between race and class on African American and Asian American sites.

There is a considerable amount of confusion regarding terminology in analyses based on race, ethnicity, and class. In these pioneering works, “ethnicity” and related terms (such as ethnic group and ethnic identity) were often used as a suitable substitution for “race” (Singleton, 1999:2; Smedley, 1999:31). This substitution was not uncommon throughout the social sciences and is rooted in attempts to emphasize that race was a social construction as opposed to the earlier, widely held biological orientation of the term (Omi and Winant, 1994:14–15; Smedley, 1999:30–35).

Although the shift to ethnicity-based theory is admirable from an anti-essentialist standpoint, by the end of the twentieth century researchers became increasingly aware that “ethnicity” was problematic when dealing with racial minorities—the victims of *racism*. Ethnicity-based approaches not only stressed the fluidity and flexibility of identity, but also stressed assimilation or acculturation as a logical response to the dilemma of racism (Omi and Winant, 1994:17). In reality, however, racial classifications are *seemingly* rigid and permanent despite the fact that racial identities themselves show an extraordinary amount of historical variance (Smedley, 1999:33). Thus, racially defined minorities were categorically different from ethnically defined minorities in that they have little choice as to their racialization. Some researchers, however, continue to use ethnicity to describe racialized subjects, especially when they want to stress agency in relation to identity formation (e.g., Baumann, 2004; Fesler and Franklin, 1999; Wilkie, 2000). With a few notable exceptions (e.g., Otto, 1980), the term “race” was not widely deployed as an analytical construct by archaeologists until relatively recently.

There is a similar amount of confusion surrounding the meaning of class in archaeological studies. There have been two major approaches to defining class among archaeologists—class has been seen as

an “objective entity, thing, or structural location” and as a social relationship (Wurst, 1999:7, 2006:191). Those stressing the objective notion of class have tended to see “classes as a descriptive attribute of individuals” or “the aggregate of individuals who share a particular descriptive quality.” As we will see below, this notion of class has played an important role in archaeological studies that use artifacts as identity markers or that employ consumer-behavior models. The second notion of class, the relational view, focuses on issues of power, struggle, conflict, and contradictions in social relationships (Wurst, 2006:197; see also McGuire and Wurst, 2002). This view has played an important role among archaeologists focusing on inequality and capitalism.

Problems Isolating Class, Ethnicity, or Race in Archaeological Analysis

The first generation of archaeologists struggling with the topics of race and class had an extraordinarily difficult time in their attempts to separate these concepts. Drawing on the well-established traditions of prehistoric archaeology, historical archaeologists attempted to focus on how “status differences” might be reflected in archaeological remains and their patterns. John Solomon Otto’s work at Cannon’s Point Plantation (Otto, 1975, 1980, 1984) should be applauded as the first to attempt to engage race as an imposed, culturally constructed condition (see discussion in Orser, 1998:662) and as the first to introduce class into the archaeological study of racially defined minorities (Singleton, 1999:3). Otto’s analysis has been critiqued for both its focus (Orser, 1988b) and its methods (Miller, 1991). Interestingly, although Otto’s work was ahead of its time in the way it attempted to deal with race and class, it also foreshadowed the problems that were symptomatic of other works engaging the connections between these two analytical registers. Otto, like many other pioneers in the field of plantation archaeology (e.g., Baker, 1980; Geismar, 1980, 1982; also see discussion in Singleton and Souza, this volume) focused on patterns in ceramics and faunal assemblages in order to discern “status differences.” Although he used the classic “caste model” in

describing the conditions of enslaved African Americans in the American South, his analysis divided assemblages into three groups: slave, overseer, and planter (see Orser [1988b:738] for a critique of the caste concept as used in plantation archaeology). This tripartite division demonstrated the difficulties in separating class from race, and the resulting conclusions revealed a gradational view of “living conditions” as seen through material culture. In effect, the planter class had the most material wealth, followed by the overseer and, finally, the slaves. Otto parsed these statuses into a “racial/legal status” that distinguished between members of the free, white caste (planters and overseers) and enslaved African Americans and a “social or occupational status” that emphasized class differences in a gradational way (i.e., planters with the most access to material wealth and slaves with the least). Otto, however, constantly struggled to understand which social dimension was being expressed by the material record (Otto, 1984:160–175). This struggle is also taken up by Lange and Handler (1985:16) who state that in their work on British Caribbean plantations that “relative social/economic status or rank can be defined archaeologically, but that at the present time legal or imposed status cannot.” Furthermore, they conclude that the class (or at least economic status) is more discernable than race:

the clear implication is that archaeological patterns resulting from slave behavior are not sufficiently well defined to be used independently [from economic status]. Excavations in such settings have indicated a confusion of patterns in which there is overlap between planter, white overseer, black slave overseers, free white, free black, and Amerindian archaeological patterns (Lange and Handler, 1985:16).

A similar, but more ambiguous result can be seen in Vernon Baker’s reanalysis of cultural material excavated from the household of Lucy Foster, a freed black woman who lived in Andover, Massachusetts, during the mid-nineteenth century. Baker, like Lange and Handler, was forced to make conclusions about what was being reflected in the assemblage of poor blacks:

Two features make Black Lucy’s Garden distinctive: 1) the site was occupied by an Afro-American, and 2) this individual was poor. Similarly, Parting Ways was occupied by needy Blacks. The issue, then, is that the patterns visible in the archaeological record may be reflecting poverty and not the presence of Afro-Americans (Baker, 1980:35).

Baker’s above mention of “Parting Ways” refers to the James Deetz’s early work at the Parting Ways site, the home of a black Revolutionary War veteran and his kin in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Parting Ways was excavated the same year as Charles Fairbanks’s work at Kingsley Plantation in Florida, but Deetz was taking a different theoretical approach to the past than Fairbanks, Otto, and others working within the “status differences” tradition. Although Deetz (1977:154) does counter the African American stereotype of “simple folk living in abject poverty,” the thrust of his analyses of early colonial America focused on large-scale structural changes in American culture throughout the colonial period. The major structural differences for Deetz are temporal, thus he downplays internal divisions such as class. Although Deetz’s (1977) influential *In Small Things Forgotten* addressed race directly (primarily through the Parting Ways site), his approach did not parse class differences in a clear way. Furthermore, his structural treatment of the Parting Ways site seemed completely separate and parallel to his analysis of “white” American culture—all white-related sites are interpreted through change (i.e., the shift from medieval to Georgian mindset), whereas the material record of Parting Ways is interpreted through continuity (i.e., Africanisms and creolized African American patterns). Thus, while Otto and Baker struggled to separate class from race in their material analysis, Deetz used the material culture at the Parting Ways site to construct a fundamentally different narrative.

Patterns, Consumer Choice, and Ethnic/Class Markers

Otto was, however, well aware that there was “an imperfect association between status and material rewards” (Otto, 1980:4, 159). This is not necessarily the case with many of the countless researchers that followed Otto’s lead into the first “boom” in plantation archaeology (e.g., Adams and Boling, 1989; Adams and Smith, 1985; Armstrong, 1985; Joseph, 1989; Klingelhofer, 1987; Lewis, 1985; Orser, 1988a, 1988b; Orser and Nekola, 1985; Wheaton and Garrow, 1985).

Throughout the 1980s, historical archaeologists began to develop two major approaches to examining race and class. The first approach attempted to find and interpret ethnic or class markers and the second focused on identifying the boundaries between groups (Griggs, 1999:88; Wurst and Fitts, 1999:2). The “ethnic marker” studies often fixated on particular classes of material culture that may be considered diagnostic of particular classes or racialized subjects. Artifacts such as colonoware, blue beads, high percentages of pipes, shortened pipe stems, opium paraphernalia, patent medicine bottles, ginger jars, cowrie shells, and particular types of food remains were often used to indicate the race, ethnicity, or class of households and groups (Griggs, 1999:87). The second approach, influenced by both Stanley South’s (1977) pattern analysis and Fedrick Barth’s (1969) notion of boundary maintenance, followed Otto’s methods and concentrated on comparing patterns between disparate classes (usually read as socioeconomic status) or racial groups (Wurst and Fitts, 1999:2). These comparative studies grew into methods that stressed patterns of material consumption—consumer-choice studies (e.g., Adams and Smith, 1985; papers in Spencer-Wood [1987a]). These studies focused on explaining “why goods of differing quality or price were selected for acquisition and archaeological deposition by different cultural subgroups in a market economy” (Spencer-Wood, 1987b:9).

Both of these approaches can be seen in the papers contributed to the seminal book *The Archaeology of Slavery and Plantation Life* (1985) edited by Theresa Singleton. In this early, influential work, many of the chapters (in particular the ones dealing with settlement patterns) seem to focus implicitly or explicitly on patterns relating to class or the more general term “status” (e.g., Adams and Smith, 1985; Lewis, 1985; Orser and Nekola, 1985). Alternatively, other papers deal nominally with racial or ethnic identity as they are primarily concerned with Africanisms and the process of acculturation (e.g., Jones, 1985; Wheaton and Garrow, 1985).

In the worst cases, concentrating on diagnostic markers objectified race and class and led many researchers to focus on either assimilation or cultural survival in an overly simplistic way. Although there may be a statistically significant correlation (Stine et al., 1996), not *every* African American

household will yield blue beads and not *every* household yielding blue beads is African American. Likewise, pattern studies and later consumerism studies often reduced consumption to a series of market transactions, where only the cost of the goods was deemed socially important (Mullins, 1999a:18), thereby bolstering the importance of class over race (Orser, 1987:125). Both approaches tended to look at housing, food remains, and ceramics to “determine the former site inhabitants’ access to material wealth and labor” and then, “in turn, determine the racial, ethnic and social status of former site inhabitants” (Otto, 1984:158).

Thankfully, the historical record often makes it unnecessary to establish the demography of a household using material culture—a fact not lost on early scholars (Lange and Handler, 1985:15; Otto, 1984:159). What later researchers would find is that the presence of these artifacts in *particular* racial or class *contexts* would provide an important starting point for a more nuanced investigation of identity and agency in the archaeological record (Perry and Paynter, 1999:301; see below for further discussion).

I believe that Orser (2004:17) has correctly correlated problems analyzing race (and, by extension, class) with problems inherent in the underlying definition of culture employed by these various researchers. Although entirely within the mainstream of the archaeology of the period, countless researchers—including Deetz with his structural approaches and Otto with his pattern analysis—used a reified, objectified notion of culture. Orser’s critique of the employment of a reified concept of “race” is mirrored by LouAnn Wurst and Robert Fitts’s discussion of class as an analytical register (Wurst, 2006; Wurst and Fitts, 1999). Class has been seen as an objective, descriptive attribute of individuals; a static, unchanging classification of reified persons and social roles (Wurst, 2006:191; Wurst and Fitts, 1999:2).

With this simplistic understanding of class and race, disparate peoples with disparate cultures could be identified by ethnic/racial/class markers or patterns, and their degrees of difference or assimilation could be tracked by changes in material culture and pattern recognition. However, the very notion of disparate cultural wholes obscured real differences, contradictions, and conflicts within and between racial and class subjectivities (Matthews et al., 2002:111).

Many historical archaeologists, however, were about to make a shift that would begin to address the contested, political, and nuanced nature of class and racial identities as well as the role archaeology plays in their interpretation.

A Multitude of Voices: Critical, Political, Mutualistic, Marxist, and Vindicationist Archaeologies of Race and Class

During the late 1980s and early 1990s there was a significant shift in how researchers were approaching race and class in the archaeological record. This shift can be linked with the growing, broader dissatisfaction with the processual approaches of the 1970s, which were accused of

uncritical acceptance of positivism, stress on functionalism and environmental adaptation, disdain for emphasis on social relations or cognition or ideology, lack of concern for the present social production of knowledge, overemphasis on stability rather than conflict, reduction of social change to effects of external factors, and belief in quantification as the goal of archaeology (Shackel and Little, 1992:5).

Other factors, such as the political consequences following the “rediscovery” of the African Burial Ground in New York in 1991 (LaRoche and Blakey, 1997:85), contributed to feeling that archaeology needed to be more critically aware and politically engaged.

Like all postprocessual archaeologies, there was no one approach promulgated by historical archaeologists attempting to deal with issues of race and class. Various archaeologists attempted to provide a theoretical framework with which to understand the past. These included various critical archaeologies drawing on the works of the Frankfurt School (e.g., Leone, 1995; Leone et al., 1987; Little, 1994; Shackel and Little, 1992), archaeologies of mutualism derived from the work of Michael Carrithers (Orser, 1996), vindicationist archaeologies drawing on anti-essentialist works and critical race theory (e.g., Epperson, 2004; LaRoche and Blakey, 1997; Mack and Blakey, 2004; Perry, 1999), archaeologies drawing on practice theory and the work of Pierre Bourdieu (e.g., Stewart-Abernathy, 2004; Wilkie, 2000), and archaeologies drawing on a combination of a variety of these and other theories—including explicitly postmodern theorists (e.g., Hall, 2000).

Despite much disagreement, the hallmarks of most archaeologies of race and class that follow this shift are an emphasis on reflexivity, the use of some brand of critical theory, and the symbolic interpretation of landscapes or of individual pieces of material culture.

Power to the People: Reflexivity and Descendant Community Involvement

Although there are several important early articulations of the shift (i.e., Leone, 1984; Leone et al., 1987), this discussion on the intersection of race and class might best be served by beginning with a series of critiques of plantation archaeology. Particularly important are Jean Howson’s (1990) and Parker Potter’s (1991) critiques—papers which can be viewed as landmarks in the transformation in how archaeologist dealt with topics such as class and race.

By the late 1980s, archaeologists using the framework provided by pioneers such as John Solomon Otto had drifted toward an approach that decentered race in favor of legal and economic status. While Otto attempted to disentangle race and class in his analysis, researchers such as Adams and Boling (1989) claimed that although “clearly linked to race,” nineteenth-century slavery in America was “much more arbitrary than commonly believed” and that status for the enslaved “was largely a legal condition, rather than one of race or skin color” (Adams and Boling, 1989:69). Potter took issue with the lack of political awareness of researchers working with racially charged materials and suggested that the focus on “quality of life,” which was tacitly linked to class, was a “dangerous trap” (Potter, 1991:97). For instance, Adams and Boling state

Indeed, on such plantations slaves may be better understood within the context of being peasants or serfs, regarding their economic status. Their legal status was still as chattel slave, of course, but their economic freedoms were much greater than most people realize (Adams and Boling, 1989:94).

Potter argued that Adams and Boling’s lack of self-reflection significantly impeded their ability to understand the implications of their work and to anticipate the possible uses of their conclusions (Potter, 1991:94). Following this critique, and others

like it, archaeologists began to talk about race *and* class *and* their historical construction. Additionally, they became increasingly sensitive to the sociopolitical implications of their work—including grappling with ways to include descendant communities as true research partners (e.g., Epperson, 2004; Franklin, 1997:37, 2001; McCarthy, 1996; Patten, 1997; Perry, 1997).

The last decade or so has seen an increasing awareness that control of archaeological resources and knowledge *must* be shared with “descendant groups, other impacted communities and the public at large” (Franklin, 1997:39)—especially given the growing concern that we as archaeologists demonstrate what have been termed the “public benefits of archaeology” (e.g., Little, 2002). This is, of course, doubly true of archaeologies dealing with topics such as class and race, where researchers “must be informed by an awareness of long-standing debates about the politics of the past” among the groups with which they are working (LaRoche and Blakey, 1997:87).

Although the idea of a “descendant community” is often linked with race, recent archaeological research, such as the work done by the Ludlow Collective at the site of the Ludlow Massacre, has demonstrated that descendant communities can play an important role in class-centered archaeologies as well (Ludlow Collective, 2001; McGuire and Reckner, 2005).

Archaeological work at such sites as the New York African Burial Ground and the Ludlow Massacre site demonstrate how important descendant communities can be to our research. Along these lines, some researchers (e.g., Epperson, 2004) have warned that we need to carefully examine our relationships with descendant communities in order to avoid condescension, trivialization, vulgar anti-essentialism or, worse, co-opting descendant community authority by nominally “consulting” with groups without truly changing the power dynamic associated with knowledge production.

Looking at Material Culture at the Intersection of Class and Race

Aside from reflexivity and descendant community partnering, the 1990s also marked a shift in how archaeologists deal with material culture. Historical archaeologists, particularly those interested in issues

such as race and class, began to stress “qualitative interpretation—rather than primarily quantitative explication, with meaning, with active symbolic uses of material culture” (Shackel and Little, 1992:5).

Many have moved toward understanding the mechanisms that frame how we see the past or the current political implications of our work, while others have looked toward their recovered material culture in a more symbolic way. Rather than using the material record as the point of origin for research questions (i.e., looking for ethnic markers or defining ethnic patterns in larger material collections), researchers began with households where the historical facts and conditions of racialization were relatively well understood. From that historical context, researchers then interrogated the material record for insightful contradictions and patterns that might shed light of the individuals’ social identities.

Researchers as diverse as Paul Mullins, Adrian and Mary Praetzelis, and Laurie Wilkie have contributed interesting and powerful interpretations of individual classes—or even individual pieces—of material culture that speak to the intersections of race and class. These works take certain cues from the consumerism studies (and perhaps the ethnic marker search) that came before them, but they manage to synthesize the two previous approaches while at the same time framing the meaning of material culture and, in a broader sense, consumption in a way that avoids essentialism and recognizes the complex, nuanced meanings of things and identity. These works see artifacts as being constantly recontextualized by their use in different social situations. Meanings for things cannot be fixed as they are a part of “live information systems” (Praetzelis and Praetzelis, 2001:645). At the same time, these researchers see material culture and consumption as a way to imagine new social possibilities—to portray not only who we are, but also who we wish to be (Mullins, 1999a:29). Thus, they question the notion that everyone who used these pieces of “material culture employed these items to convey the same idea and for the same purposes” (Praetzelis and Praetzelis, 2001:647).

In this vein, Praetzelis and Praetzelis examine the manipulation of meanings behind the English ceramics in the home of Yee Ah Tye, a wealthy Chinese American merchant in California (Praetzelis and Praetzelis, 2001:648–649). Mullins looks at the powerful symbolic meaning behind “bric-a-brac”

and political paraphernalia in postbellum African American households in Maryland and California (Mullins, 1999a:19–39, 1999b, 2001), and Wilkie explores possible interpretations of items such as antiseptic bottles using confederate imagery found at black sharecropper households in Louisiana (Wilkie, 2000:176–180).

The key to this approach is an understanding of the broader social and historical contexts of everyday objects which can be used to help consumers “see themselves as, or opposed to, racial [or class] subjectivities” (Mullins, 1999a:18). These approaches, in this author’s opinion, take giant leaps toward interpreting the complex web of identities entangled with issues such as race and class.

One potential area of improvement in this line of reasoning, however, is a problem of focusing on a few artifacts to the detriment of the whole assemblage. The act of concentrating on symbolically charged artifacts has yielded good results, but it might leave others wondering about the importance of the other 99 percent of the material recovered from excavations. This is not an entirely fair criticism, given the limitations of scholarly publication (I note, for example, that Praetzelis and Praetzelis include such material in their technical reports). To a certain extent, however, I feel that this is part of a remaining backlash against the hyper-quantification (and dehumanization) of the processual archaeologies of the 1970s. If this is the case, perhaps the pendulum has swung too widely. I believe it is entirely possible to do good archaeology using aggregated material culture as long as one is aware of the pitfalls that befell those who worked with patterns and Africanisms in the 1980s and 1990s.

An example of research that combines the nuanced, symbolic consumer interpretations with some degree of quantification to get at the intersections of class, ethnic/racial identity, and gender is Margaret Wood’s examination of women, housework, and working-class activism at the site of the Ludlow Massacre and Berwind (Wood, 2002, 2004). In these, Wood examines the use of space and patterns in household refuse (i.e., degree of reliance on canned goods and ceramic evidence for coffee-related socializing) to assess women’s roles in organizing across ethnic and racial lines.

Cultural Analysis: Expanding the Discourse on Race and Class

Although we have improved our ability to look at race and class in the material record, the intersections of the two phenomena can still remain elusive. Archaeological understandings of culture, poverty, and race are “necessarily complex and historically situated” (Orser, 2004:37) and in many of our works the categorical analyses of identity—race, class, and gender—compete as the key to social phenomena.

Recently, cultural anthropologist John Hartigan examined the “enduring contentious debates over the relative priority” of these three critical registers of social identity and proposed a return to a broader cultural analysis as a possible answer. He asserts, quite correctly, that analysts who feature one of these registers often end up

asserting the centrality or singular importance of, say, race over class, or gender over either race or class. A cultural perspective, in contrast, renders these registers simultaneously active and mutually informing, rather than disputing whether one is more fundamental than the others (Hartigan, 2005:9).

Statements like this are echoed in many strains of African American scholarship and literature. For instance, in Richard Wright’s introduction to Drake and Cayton’s seminal work *Black Metropolis* he states

The political left often gyrates and squirms to make the Negro problem fit rigidly into a class-war frame of reference, when *the roots of that problem lie in American culture as a whole*; it tries to anchor the Negro problem to patriotism of global time and space, which robs the problem of its reality and urgency, of its concreteness and tragedy (Wright, 1945:xxix, emphasis added).

Thus, for Wright, the problem of racism does not lie in categories such as class and race, but in the very structures of American culture writ large. In reality, these categorical registers are “a series of interlocking codes by which patterns of inequality are maintained and reproduced in perceptions of similarity and difference” (Hartigan, 2005:9). If we really are to get at these interlocking patterns of inequality, we must hold more than one analytical register in focus at the same time. We must approach race and class from a holistic cultural perspective.

Culture: Problem or Solution?

I have stated earlier that I believe that Orser has correctly pointed toward the concept of culture as a root of our problems addressing the archaeologies of race and class. Orser points out that most “archaeologists concentrating on the archaeology of slavery during the earliest years of this disciplinary focus used Krober’s whole-cultural concept, largely via South and Deetz, as a methodological framework” (Orser, 2004:18). This “whole-culture” consisted of patterned regularity with definite boundaries and was the basis of most of the archaeological approaches covered in the early portion of this chapter—pattern analysis (South, 1977) and the search for “Africanisms” or cultural survivals (Fairbanks, 1974). The unsatisfactory nature of this reified notion of culture is one part of what the 1990s postprocessual shift worked to change. This shift, however, increasingly led archaeologists away from culture and toward categorical analyses of identity and more thematic frames (i.e., plantation archaeology, the archaeology of capitalism, and the archaeology of inequality).

Similar reified and objectified notions of culture have also led a whole generation of cultural anthropologists away from the culture concept (e.g., Abu-Lughod, 1991; papers in Dirks [1998]). The problems connected to “culture,” however, like the problems connected with “quantification” in archaeology, need not be absolute. I will have to concur with other researchers—both in cultural anthropology and archaeology—that taking a “cultural perspective” on race and class can afford researchers several advantages, provided that one avoids the problems of past formulations of the concept.

Among archeological researchers, Orser’s (2004:20–21) solution is to look toward creolization (when not misconstrued as a blended whole-culture) in order to solve the problem. I, like Mullins and Paynter (2000), see a strong connection between creolization, ethnogenesis, and culture change, and I believe that Orser’s description of creolization is simply how *all* culture works (see Gundaker [2000] for critique of simplified notions of creolization). Matthews, Leone, and Jordan (2002) also take us in this direction through their application of Marxist critique to cultural production. Rather than

understanding culture as “an orderly and structured whole,” they contend that it is “an amalgamation of discontinuous interests, often in conflict, forged and reproduced as an entity through struggle and domination” (Matthews et al., 2002:110). Thus, cultural analysis, when correctly conceived, can demonstrate how the constructions of race, class, and gender distinctions operate “according to place-specific dynamics that ground and facilitate the concurrent production and reproduction of multiple overlapping and mutually reinforcing identities” (Hartigan, 2005:258).

The Archaeologies of White Racial Identity and Privilege

Hartigan’s call for cultural analysis, however, is embedded in his project examining “white trash” as a liminally white group that cannot be understood solely in terms of class or race (Hartigan, 1997, 1999, 2005). Hartigan’s whiteness (and white-skinned privilege) is not monolithic, and thus raises the concern that examining whiteness will re-center the privileged narrative and further undermine the perspective of racialized minorities. As archaeologists begin to examine whiteness, I believe that we can take advantage of cultural analysis, while simultaneously keeping inequalities at the forefront.

Although the first call to archaeologically examine (poor) whiteness can be found in Baker’s (1980:36) reanalysis of Lucy Foster’s Garden, it was not until relatively recently that archaeologists have begun in earnest to examine whiteness as a racial identity (Epperson 1997, 1999; Orser, 1999:666; Wilkie, 2004:118). Archaeologists are now investigating the different ways that whiteness is culturally embedded and leveraged for privilege in rural Massachusetts (Paynter, 2001), the Arkansas Ozark Mountains (Brandon, 2004b; Brandon and Davidson, 2005), Ireland (Orser, 2004:196–246), and Virginia (Bell, 2005).

In Massachusetts and the Ozarks, researchers have examined how racialized cultural memories of entire regions erase the presence of people of color, while at the same time shoring up the notion

of white purity. In Ireland, Orser has examined conflict in the village of Ballykilcline and connected it to the larger struggle of the Irish to transform themselves into members of the privileged “white race,” while Bell has examined the important connection between the creation of whiteness and the development of capitalist economic systems using colonial Chesapeake case studies. These studies should be applauded for following Faye Harrison’s (1995:63, 1998) calls to expand the discourse on race from an anthropological viewpoint. On the other hand, we must always be vigilant when examining whiteness (and applying broader cultural analyses) as it could easily lead to decentering the dramatic inequalities highlighted by the categorical registers of race and class. For instance, some of my own work (Brandon, 2004b) examining the historical trope of the “Ozark Hillbilly” could be reinterpreted as deconstructing the idea of white-skin privilege by producing a case of a “white other”—a result I would have never intended.

Conclusion

Where does this look at the intersections of race and class in historical archaeology leave us? Early attempts looked at race and class in simple objective terms—searching for markers and patterns in the recovered material culture and reifying the very concepts whose history we are attempting to understand. Attempts to isolate race and/or class as *the* important analytical factor were problematic because these two registers are so closely linked. The search for patterns morphed into consumer studies (especially in the case of class) and, in some corners, race became subordinated to class as the explanatory variable.

Frustrations with this trend led to the creation of historical archaeologies of race and class that stressed (1) public outreach and descendant community partnering and (2) a more complex, symbolic version of artifact analysis. These more recent attempts have taken positive steps by looking at material culture in a more nuanced way—starting from known contexts and exploring interpretive possibilities. But these newer works also focus on small numbers of artifacts that may be charged with symbolic value. All too often we do not hear the voices of the other thousands of artifacts recovered from the sites.

I have proposed that an explicitly holistic cultural analysis may be a fruitful alternative to analyzing competing categorical registers (i.e., class and race). If applied in a nonreifying manner, a cultural analysis may reveal the complex linkages between different, but often simultaneously manifested, identities.

Following Hartigan (2005:284), however, I believe that cultural analysis is not an end in itself and that we must keep the dramatic structural inequalities at the forefront of our analysis. Likewise, the explicit examination of whiteness will be an important part of our tool kit as activist researchers, but it can be a dangerous tool—potentially presenting a fragmented whiteness that obscures privilege and access to power.

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Ethical Issues in Historical Archaeology

Mary C. Beaudry

Introduction

Archaeologist and philosopher of science Alison Wylie has observed that the very identity of archaeology as a discipline is closely linked to how its practitioners frame their concerns around ethical issues (Wylie, 1996). Prior to the late 1970s, most archaeologists developed a sense of ethically appropriate behavior on more or less an individual, ad hoc basis, relying upon whatever role models presented themselves during graduate training and upon subsequent personal experience in the office or in the field. This informal and highly idiosyncratic approach to professional ethics is not serviceable in the contemporary milieu in which archaeology is practiced, as Brian Fagan (1993) and others have noted. A series of developments since the 1970s reflect the growing sense among professional archaeologists, particularly those working in the United States and the United Kingdom, that they need some sort of structured approach to deal with the ethical issues they confront. These developments include the formation of the Society of Professional Archaeologists (SOPA) in 1976, which vested itself from the outset in ethics and performance standards among professional archaeologists working in the Americas (cf. Society of Professional Archaeologists, 1988); the formation of a similar professional organization in Britain, the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), in 1982 (Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994); the adoption of numerous governmental and agency guidelines and standards for archaeological projects; and initiatives

among major archaeological organizations in the 1980s and 1990s that led to the revision of existing codes of conduct that had become inadequate for addressing contemporary dilemmas facing the archaeological community (e.g., Archaeological Institute of America, 1994; Lynott and Wylie, 1995a; Society for American Archaeology, 1995, 1996; Society for Historical Archaeology, 1992).

The most recent development arising out of the movement toward greater professionalism among archaeologists is still unfolding. The Register of Professional Archaeologists (Register, or RPA) was created by a joint task force of SOPA, the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), and the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) as a joint registry intended to provide an effective means of enforcing basic professional standards among practicing archaeologists in the United States (though there are now members from elsewhere as well). SOPA voted to transfer its responsibility, authority, and assets to the Register. The SHA, SAA, and AIA all voted to become sponsors of the Register, with the American Anthropological Association following shortly thereafter. Sponsoring organizations endorse the mission of the Register, encourage their qualified members to register, and provide annual financial support (see “About the Register of Professional Archaeologists” on the organization’s web site at <http://www.rpanet.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=1>). The philosophy behind the Register is “that by registering, archaeologists publicly endorse and agree to be held accountable to a basic set of eligibility requirements, a code of ethical principles, and standards of professional performance” (ROPA Task Force, 1997:27). The basic

M.C. Beaudry e-mail: beaudry@bu.edu