

HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

And Reshaping the Myths of American Origins

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My aim in this paper is two-fold. One is to appraise the state of historical archaeology in the United States, and the second is to identify the problems in historical archaeology in such a way that your knowing them may make a difference to our mutual concern with the resource curated and explored by historical archaeology.

The state of historical archaeology is itself a two-fold matter worthy of consideration. As I attempt this, I will use the names of archaeologists and archaeological sites to make certain points but will not try for anything like a broad coverage of activity in the field.

By all measures of activity in a scientific field, historical archaeology has been utterly transformed in the last 10 years. The two major events that have shaped virtually all archaeological activity are its absorption into anthropology and its expansion through "public archaeology," also called culture resource management or contract archaeology.

Historical archaeology has not yet developed an official history. No one has established a chronicle for it, identified its catalytic events, great men, demons, mistakes, or problems solved. Only recently has it established an honorific medal and bestowed its first one on Pinkey Harrington, thus establishing a father, a beginning, and all the logical possibilities that go along with paternity, and origins.

To go along with medals, there is a guessing list as to who should be the recipients of the next several. As important as the awards themselves are the guessing, hoping, discussion and planning, since they form the parameters for action. These automatically establish significant vs. unimportant achievements, important vs. unimportant publications, and models for emulation vs. those who made career errors. All this shapes the field as do the nasty asides made by wise graduate students, displaced historians, untutored prehistorians suddenly confronted with a new arcana, and of course those worthy but unchosen for medals. The point, of course, is that in a field without a history, providing one is more than just a historical or scholarly pursuit: it establishes an identity. Once the past is shaped, interpreted, or given meaning, action is much less random...or seems so...and work becomes easier to evaluate.

Provide a written history, and it becomes possible to say which work was wrong, incomplete, misguided, or even sloppy, and which work...simple when done and otherwise unremarkable...had the hidden seed of genius within it.

The origins of historical archaeology already are conventionally agreed upon although they have not been presented in any

particularly remarkable way, nor have canons of performance yet been clearly established. So historical archaeology is a field with no history of any kind. Still, it has a past; it has substantial achievements; it came from somewhere. Providing the field with a history, then, is no incidental enterprise. As a matter of policy it should have one.

No one has dealt with the most serious event in historical archaeology's history: its movement into anthropology. Long ago it was acknowledged that history, the discipline from which historical archaeology stems is quite remarkably different from anthropology, the discipline in which the bulk of all historical archaeologists now are trained. The differences often are misidentified and colored with pejoratives but they come down to how far data are to be taken when interpreted. And the two fields just are not aligned on this matter.

The fact that the passage of historical archaeology from history into anthropology is unrecorded is of particular significance for those who must make or consider policy for this field because it means that judging aims and performance is deeply ambiguous, painful, and next to impossible. The state of the art of historical archaeology must include its current transition from a discipline that regarded digging in the ground as a way of verifying historical records and of supplementing them with otherwise unavailable data, to a social science. The social science insisted that human behavior, or culture, or cross-cultural patterns, or processes of cultural change, not mere verification, were the ultimate goals for itself and all its members. This is no mean goal and has called up no mean amount of palaver, pouting, and fighting.

A lot of energy was put into establishing historical archaeology within anthropology and the putting has been accomplished; that is part of the state of the field. Now, comes the problem. What does historical archaeology look like when done as anthropology? There are two answers, neither one of which has a commanding lead over the other.

The first answer is most clearly articulated by Stanley South of the Institute of Archeology and Anthropology of the University of South Carolina. South imported wholesale the model of scientific prehistory established during the 1960s by Lewis Binford and his students in American archaeology. South argued that historical archaeology was to employ scientific method including hypothesis testing, was to be concerned with universal patterns of human behavior, and would draw its problems from the concept of culture defined as humanity's way of adapting to its environment. This meant that in investigating the colonial period in America and elsewhere, the historical archaeologist was not solely concerned with whether or not the records were right or the folk tales accurate; he was concerned with world cultural systems associated with European expansion from the 15th Century on. The expansion of European profit-making systems was not a matter of when some fort was built or how some house was

constructed; those were what was now called historical problems, meaning that they were particular questions. Rather, historical archaeologists were concerned with how different classes lived, what they ate, how much imported ware they could afford, whether Africans retained any of their original culture after coming to the New World. What were the class differences between planters and overseers, and slaves; British officers and regular soldiers? Class distinctions, clearly a product of economic conditions, were a chief consideration, not details of house construction, unless that too was an indicator of labor, as is the case in the colonial Chesapeake. There, abundance of wood, rapid depletion of tobacco land, and scarcity of labor created a kind of disposable housing which used a lot of hardwood, but could be built fast and abandoned quickly. Post-in-the-ground architecture was not now so much a matter of architectural detail or a stage in American architectural history as it was an artifact from which to understand the human response to the environment in an early stage of colonization.

The advent of a fully anthropological archaeology for American prehistorians began during the mid-1960s and through the 1970s it became one of the most productive ever seen in the field. There is little agreement about what aspects of the new archaeology, as it is called, was most responsible for the remarkable and productive change in the field, but there is no question about the change. South's introduction of this constellation of practices into historical archaeology dramatizes this change. There is no way to tell whether the use of scientific method has made much difference since little actual interpretation has been done on class, its origins, conditions, or evolution; the actual discoveries of new data or changes in understanding of old data are quite slender.

The major issue unresolved in using a successful model for doing prehistoric archaeology in historical archaeology is the status of the written record. This is a flat issue which does not yet have a solution. There is no theoretical place for documents in the model now current and most popular for how to practice historical archaeology. Not only that, but until recently most historical archaeologists believed that records could be treated like time machines. An artifact of an unfamiliar sort could be taken to Diderot's *Encyclopedia* and identified. It was like the wish of every prehistorian fulfilled. And that primitive relationship still exists, although modified. Nonetheless, the need is now better recognized. What is needed is a set of questions linking the archaeological record and the documentary record in complementary fashion. Their absence is the major weakness in conventionally practiced historical archaeology.

The condition of historical archaeology today is due in good part to the condition of anthropology as a field. The health of that discipline is of course variable but one enormous development within anthropology is now of quite genuine significance, and that is the study of meaning. Early in the 20th Century anthropologists developed techniques of field work to discover or es-

tablish how native peoples viewed themselves and their worlds. The internationally famous results for over half a century compose our understanding of people utterly and remarkably different from ourselves. It has been possible to fathom how different and not-at-all-primitive Australian aborigines are from ourselves; the same is true for the peoples of the Pacific, Africa, and native North and South America.

Built upon the genuine achievements of 20th Century ethnography have been several traditions of interpretation. At least three schools of theory have attempted to order the data collected on native systems of meaning. One is structuralism and has had only limited impact on historical archaeology. Another is ethno-science, known also as cognitive anthropology. A third is symbolic analysis. All these schools of theory stem from early 20th Century phenomenology, which began to have a major impact on anthropology in the early 1960s, just as historical archaeology was taken up by archaeologists trained as anthropologists.

The result has been the advent of a second and wholly different conception of how to go about doing historical archaeology and what the results should be. This conception has been best articulated by James Deetz and, although frequently identified with structuralism, is more closely allied with cognitive theory. Even though the theoretical alliance is significant, the major differences are with evolutionary theory as introduced by Stan South. Deetz argues that thought patterns, not behavior, are to be understood from the past. His interest is in how people cast their worlds; how they created and used systems of meaning. His major contribution took very different classes of artifacts such as gravestones, ceramics, knives and forks, chamber pots, and fenestration and showed the single grammar or set of rules which organized the use of classes of artifacts regardless of their primary function. The Georgian worldview, or bilateral symmetry, which resulted, defined a mental or cognitive pattern thought to characterize people living in New England in the 18th Century.

Even though few people have tried to duplicate this work within historical archaeology, it has been very influential and will no doubt continue to be. The very richness and imagination of the approach have attracted much attention and caused a lot of discussion. The weaknesses of the approach are several and serious. Even though structuralism and cognitive theory were created to analyze texts, and even though historical archaeology must make use of texts or be bankrupt intellectually, the theory and its methods have not been applied to documentary materials in any very systematic or theoretically sympathetic way. If anything, archaeologists employing a cognitive approach regard documents as the time machine or time capsules all their peers do. This leads to the second and most serious limitation of a cognitive approach in historical archaeology. That is, it does not actually have a method which has been so articulated it can be taught and copied. So, the approach to reconstructing mind, which is very well developed in several branches of anthropo-

logy, looks mystical in historical archaeology. It need not, but it does. This is a shortcoming of no mean proportion.

Given two quite different ways of doing historical archaeology within an anthropological framework and given too the continued resilience of the historical rationale for doing historical archaeology, we come to a major problem faced by all policy makers. How do you defend an endeavor whose goals vary, whose achievements are hard to assess, and whose expense is quite high? This is a big problem. It was and remains easy to judge whether an archaeologist digging at Jamestown, Williamsburg, Plymouth or any place else told us something historians did not know, guessed inaccurately, or otherwise found to be useful. In the old relationship it was a canon for evaluating new knowledge. One could thus defend the importance of the resource, the expense of preservation, excavation, conservation, display, and so on. This case has not yet been found in historical archaeology now moved into anthropology. It will, one day, I am sure, and I am sure too that the old rationale of a complementary relationship to history, although of little theoretical interest now, will always be an important justification for public protection of archaeological resources.

The practical problem posed by two very different ways of doing historical archaeology can be seen in the trivial level of funding available for historical archaeology at virtually every level of traditional support. The worst case is likely to be the Anthropology Program in the National Science Foundation where a couple of facts make the case for the problem. Almost no historical archaeology has been funded by the Foundation. Having read a fair share of proposals submitted both when I was a panel member from 1978 to 1980 and as a peer reviewer since then, I can testify to several facts. There is no lack of proposals, and their level of scholarship, preparation, background, experience, and so on, is high...no better than the prehistorians, but no worse. However, the level of anthropological importance is very low. Few or no questions of anthropological importance are entertained in the proposals. And that kills them every time.

I do not understand fully why this should be the case, but I know from painful personal experience how hard it is to recommend a proposal from a perfectly fine anthropologist who, in proposing to dig a historic site, can find no good anthropological reason for doing so. This is a very worrisome event which is tied directly to the incompletely worked out goals of the two competing approaches to historical archaeology. If you take South's ideas as realized by a wide range of archaeologists, they do not amount to much in the way of scientific discoveries, or even anthropological discoveries. Certainly this school shows almost no ability to conceptualize a problem either scientifically or anthropologically. On the other hand, Deetz and his school are so shy on method that intuition seems triumphant as a mode of discovery. But to be reasonable, the trouble is that in the absence of a set procedure for doing historical archaeology and

in the absence of a set of goals, ways of defining problems, and acceptable answers, we are confronted with a most precious resource for which we cannot marshal the machinery of science to protect.

The use of anthropology as a home for historical archaeology has created a difference in the achievements of this kind of archaeology. Despite what I just said, it is more sophisticated, more self-reflective, more ambitious about what it can achieve, more independent. South and Deetz and others have imparted a degree of intellectual ambition and new hope to the field. I have spent time here identifying what parts of that ambition have not been realized, but I do not want that effort to cloud the fact that historical archaeology, like prehistory 20 years ago and geology 15 years ago, is undergoing a major reorganization and intellectual change.

Part of this change can be described through the advent of culture resource management into historical archaeology. I would like to shift to this now. I doubt that there is any point in describing what culture resource management is to this audience. Many of you helped create it and enforce it. But it has had two kinds of impact on the field I am appraising. The first is numerical. Culture resource management covers historical materials and once that occurred, many prehistoric archaeologists and graduate students in archaeology became interested in working with them. Once a resource had to be protected as required by any body of law or regulation, a group of archaeologists was drawn to serve that function. And over time a considerable number of historical archaeologists was created.

The positive upshot of culture resource management has been the wealth of data recovered archaeologically. Large numbers of sites have been dug and some extremely significant ones have caused the archaeological record's richness and possibilities to be much more clearly understood.

However, the most important upshot from tying together historical archaeology and public archaeology remains largely ignored. That is the tie between archaeology and American history. For the first time in over a century there is a direct, unambiguous connection between the archaeological data which American archaeologists handle and the past of their own civilization. For the first time ever American archaeologists were not doing American Indian prehistory, ethnohistory, or Paleolithic history. For the first time since American archaeology was created, which was somewhere around the turn of the century, the people who dug were excavating their own history. We have here a completely unique event created by Federal legislation, however inadvertently.

The practitioners of a field started to recover data which were no longer irrelevant to their own culture's past, but which composed some of that past's unique remains. That is the remarkable event caused by tying historical archaeology to culture resource management at a time when most historical archaeologists were coming from anthropology.

The seriousness of this combination of events must not be underestimated. American anthropologists are not trained to study complex societies and certainly not capitalist ones. American anthropologists know almost nothing about the modern United States and absolutely nothing about its past. Indeed, for most of the 20th Century, American anthropology was unconcerned with historical data of any sort, tending even to confuse myth and fiction. American anthropology has never developed or borrowed a competent intellectual tradition for dealing with written texts. Beyond these facts was the field's stubbornness in dealing with non-primitive peoples, with Western cultures, with Marxist or psycho-analytic theory...the only competent theories for handling much of the data from the West. All this has to be overcome before there can be a productive historical archaeology. It is a huge problem and an utterly amazing one, for it offers American archaeologists an opportunity to be involved in their own pasts; the pasts of their own culture. This is the special event in historical archaeology.

Archaeology started off in the Renaissance as a way of recovering the Western past; not a foreign past. The Scandinavian and British founding of prehistoric archaeology involved the very distant past, but one related to the present in some fashion or other either because the past cultures were developmentally related to the present or because of spatial proximity. Gordon Childe did European prehistory because he wanted to know where Europe came from. He did not do it because he was interested in cross-cultural regularities, cultural processes, or culture writ large. None of that could ever have been true in the United States. We have always known that the archaeology of North America had virtually nothing to do with those of us who dug it up.

Now that that situation is changed and historical archaeology is firmly fixed both to the American past and to anthropology, let us look at what is happening to it. The major observation I want to describe and elaborate is the nearly complete absence on the part of historical archaeologists of an understanding that they can have something worthwhile to say about American history. Every one of the historical archaeologists is convinced that the data are important, but virtually none knows why. That situation exists because no theoretical link has been made between three points: the data of historical archaeology have not been linked in a significant way to American history and no tie has been created between American history and American national identity.

The link is not a mysterious one; it has been made in virtually every other country in the world but our own. Third world countries, the Soviet block, Israel, Mexico, Scandinavia, all use history presented and celebrated publicly to form public opinion with regard to who a people is. This is done as a matter of deliberate, planned public policy. The United States is the only significant country in the world where this does not occur.

Lest anyone conclude that the laissez faire use of historical

material gives us only George Washington on liquor bottles and the American flag over used car lots, much more is wrong than that. As part of my appraisal of the state of American historical archaeology I would like to describe the settings in which historical, including often archaeological materials, are interpreted to the public in the United States. In this way I believe we can begin to comprehend the scope of the issue facing us today regarding the health and future of historical archaeology.

I would like to take three different parts of one event. A year ago there was a massive celebration of the Surrender at Yorktown which marked the end of British and American fighting in the American Revolution. The Surrender of the British was a matter of great historical significance and the 200th anniversary of the surrender was to be of similar importance. I think it is fair to say that the anniversary celebration was such a mixture of the trivial, the irrelevant, the inappropriate, and the mistaken that only its negative lessons should be remembered. All this is true despite the heroic efforts of an awful lot of people in and out of the Park Service to prevent what they knew would be of dubious value.

I saw the afternoon devoted to the arrival of Rochambeau's troops in downtown Annapolis, Maryland. This was a remarkable celebration, so good its lessons are quite instructive. Hundreds of men and women marched into Annapolis, assembled at Maryland's elegant and interesting Statehouse and listened to an hour and a half ceremony. The ceremony is crucial to my argument about historical archaeology because it contained good examples of all three ways Americans currently understand the past.

The first event of significance was a speech by Harry Hughes, Governor of Maryland. It was a well researched description of the historical events associated with the Revolution in Maryland, including the events taking place in the Statehouse that all were then facing. The events included Washington's resignation of his commission after the Revolution and the signing of the Treaty of Paris ending the Revolution. The Governor's speech was a smooth outline of significant events which happened without a commentary or any interpretation or message for today. It was skillful, flat, and almost tour guide-like for those who...contrary to fact...were thought to know little or nothing about Maryland or its capitol's history.

The Governor's pure description of history, without any comment on meaning, is one of three ways the past is communicated in the United States today. It was an example of how this is done without the substantial interference of the present projected on to the past in order to make the past more relevant or realistic.

After the Governor spoke, a Catholic priest gave a prayer, the bulk of which was a direct recitation of the famous Prayer for Peace of St. Francis: Lord make me an instrument of your peace. The idea in this invocation of an otherwise incongruous

citation from the 12th Century, was the calling forth of universal attitudes to universal human predicaments. Here is war, peace, hope, and humans, all in self evident and often repeated situations, and the way to deal with one war or peace is to make reference to all war and peace. Faith in God, the nature of humans and of saints is the same time out of mind and can be called upon to explain and moderate any analogous situation.

The reasoning here is not so much analogical, however, as it is allegorical, which is to say that otherwise unconnected events and people and things are connected in the present because similar ones were connected in the past. Allegorical reasoning is called sympathetic magic in anthropology. Supposing that the King of France could cure diseases by touching someone during his coronation because David or Solomon did, and that the King as a king could do likewise is allegorical reasoning. Supposing that the Pope in washing feet on Holy Thursday is humble just as Jesus was in doing the same act is allegorical reasoning.

When employed on historical data, allegorical reasoning assumes the whole past is immediately accessible to use and understanding. That is self-evident, but allegorical reasoning also robs the past of its integrity. In other words, allegorical reasoning, when used on data from the past, makes the past and present similar in their causes. There is no confusion between the facts of present and past; there is, however, an identity assumed in the causal relations between the event in the past and present when the two sets are compared. While the Catholic priest never intended the upshot, the result was to see the past in terms of the present very much as the Middle Ages saw the past. That is to say, there was a simple continuum between now and then with no profound or fundamental changes. There were no separate cultures or times so removed as to be inaccessible to common understanding. Lest you suppose this is so remarkable, the conventional understanding of the colonial era in America uses just this same logic.

The third event of note in the Rochambeau celebration was a prayer and sermon by an Episcopal priest from the chief church in Annapolis. In a benediction he had written for the occasion, he spoke of planet Earth and how God uses history to work his way. The Protestant clergyman looked at history as a way of understanding (1) that God did work His way, (2) how He worked His way, and (3) that He worked now, given that He had then. The conventional name for this approach is Salvation History and it is used by virtually all Christian churches and, to be honest, is fairly out of style among all intellectually aware ecclesiastical scholars. It can be trotted out for occasions like public events, but my point here is that it is a pure form completely alive in interpreting secular American history. Indeed, it was the dominant form of American history in the 19th Century and remains one of the dominant ways of interpreting the past at many outdoor history museums. Secular salvation history is what Colonial Williamsburg was founded to teach, as its motto says: "That the future may learn from the past."

The three modes of access to the past that I have outlined are (1) pure, unexplained description, (2) direct access via allegory or analogy, and (3) salvation history. If we turn to the celebrations at Yorktown, all three means of understanding the past are visible, but notably in their worst cast scenario and involving enough archaeology to link historical archaeologists. There was on the Sunday of the Yorktown affair a small ceremony in the visitor center of the site. The center has archaeological information, which is interpreted flatly. The artifacts are identified and their original function explained. Nothing spectacular, nothing wrong; standard Park Service honesty.

Against this example of pure but unexplained description falls the present which is not obviously tied to these artifacts in any way at all. The artifacts came from the Revolution, were used in it and were left mute. A few signs did not give them life and this is a very big problem, for the actual life given the Revolution during the celebration was given in vignettes like the following: Two busts, one of Lafayette and one of Rochambeau, were unveiled that Sunday in the center. They were a gift of Mr. A. H. Robbins who the Episcopal minister and French attaché explained was related directly and metaphorically to the virtues of these two great heroes. The business acumen of Mr. Robbins was said to be the equal of the military acumen of the heroes. And because Mr. Robbins was from one of Virginia's best families, he exemplified a tie to the great traits of the Revolutionary era.

In the unveiling speeches Mr. Robbins was given the virtues of the dead, thus creating an identity...however momentary...between the two in an example of history by allegory; business success became military success and all through a capacity of mind, which in being called acumen is about like saying spirit or genius. This link was created by the French spokesman. The Protestant spokesman dwelled on Mr. Robbins genealogy using a form of secular salvation history. This amounted to saying that Virginia gave great families once and could be expected to continue doing so. There was a pattern in history and, in Virginia at least, it could be found grounded in the metaphor of biological continuity.

Now you ask, what is wrong with all this? Isn't it universal? There are two answers. History is frequently misappropriated and, when counterbalanced by those in a position to say what is actually going on, is fairly innocent. And second, no country in the world except our own has allowed its past to be understood through epistemologies as primitive as the three available at Yorktown. The misuse of history using these three modes of understanding is so flagrant, so well known, and so classic that we stand alone in still using them unassisted or uncomplemented by any other.

Afterall, it was just a matter of months after Mr. Robbins unveiled his gift to the nation at Yorktown that he and his company, the A. H. Robbins Pharmaceutical Company, were ac-

cused by the federal government of producing drugs which had no demonstrable effect upon the symptoms they were supposed to relieve. Much of the Yorktown celebration was as uninspiring as Mr. Robbins' performance and the long run result is that the surrender was not given any reasonable meaning or lasting interpretation. It was sold and used, and it could be, because there is no understanding in either the lay or scholarly worlds...at least there is none in historical archaeology...that there is or even could be an alternative to such weak epistemologies.

The public performance of outdoor history and archaeology takes place in what are conventionally known as outdoor history museums and farms. There are hundreds of these in the United States and they began, more or less with Williamsburg, about 50 years ago. Their purpose is to interpret history and they use one of the three epistemologies outlined earlier. Many of these outdoor living history museums are run by the government in National Parks or in association with historic houses.

The entire idea of outdoor living history comes from Scandinavia and occurred there in the late 19th Century as a way of preserving a vanishing folk or rural way of life. They were not originally meant to recreate a long gone way of life as they have come to do in this country...an endeavor which necessarily entails historical archaeology.

The surrender at Yorktown was merely a prominent example of the kind of recreation common to outdoor living history as it is now found in the United States. The people who run such enterprises are professional museum experts very well aware of the disciplines their museums must draw from for their content. But among themselves they understand their field has not progressed all that far beyond the aims John D. Rockefeller, Jr. set out for Colonial Williamsburg in the later 1920s. They know their field is ripe for change and are struggling to bring it about.

Up to this point the tie between historical archaeology and the public interpretation of its discoveries has been slender, although I take it for granted that everyone knows that virtually every outdoor museum and almost every historic house either has or could have an archaeological component. I would like now to describe two current large-scale archaeological operations which give some idea of the extent of archaeological work and then build on that description to link them to outdoor interpretation. The two operations are being carried on by Stanley South and James Deetz, respectively.

Stanley South has been digging at Santa Elena on the coast of South Carolina since 1979. The site is on Parris Island and has been dug in cooperation with the Marine Corps, the National Geographic Society, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. The site is a Spanish fort and settlement. It was occupied, please understand, between 1566 and 1587. Spaniards lived in South Carolina for 20 years in the 16th Century. They did not just hold down a fort; they farmed, settled, colonized and so

forth. They founded the place. They also were forced out by the Indians.

South's excavations have involved the forts, domestic structures, a well, and he has used the surviving documentary record. It is a wide-scale excavation involving housing, ditches, Indian remains, Spanish middens and floral remains, that is, diet and domesticated foods. Taken with the material from St. Augustine, Florida, South's materials constitute a major opening created by historical archaeology into the Spanish settlement of the United States in the 16th Century. And not the late 16th Century either. The ethnohistoric work done by David Quinn and others on Spanish contact with American Indian populations along the U. S. East Coast clearly delineated a picture of extensive, intensive, widely communicated knowledge of the East Coast of the U. S. The information was used by the English and Dutch in the next century to avoid Spanish mistakes in these very places and to insure more successful colonies. The point is: we are moving away from the myth of English origins for America's founding era and historical archaeology is the chief vehicle in providing the data for a new view.

Deetz's excavations at Flowerdew Hundred are done almost entirely within the context of public interpretation. Deetz began his work at Flowerdew three years ago, although excavation by others had begun earlier. The south side of the James River in Virginia was settled in the second decade of the 17th Century and the thousand acre plantation called Flowerdew Hundred was settled in 1617. It has been occupied as a plantation ever since and remains intact now, having been reassembled in private hands as a foundation devoted to preserving and interpreting American history, largely through archaeology. The archaeological value of the large tract is the large, early undisturbed sites, including the initial fort and settlement. These are being excavated now and Deetz and graduate students from Berkeley are interpreting the remains.

Several sites from three centuries are worked on each summer and the entire spectrum of agricultural remains will be covered. The program for excavation is very wide and is encompassed by a planned, but not yet fully implemented, public interpretive program whose goal is to display to visitors life in the 17th and later Centuries. The kind of program Deetz initiated at Plimoth Plantation based on role playing and deep familiarity with language, foods, housing, and the whole range of customary habits will be introduced at Flowerdew to bring a virtually foreign way of life back to life.

Noel Hume's justly famous excavations recently published as *Martin's Hundred* is the most vivid recreation of early 17th Century life to date. Hume's extraordinary ability as a writer, long established skill as an archaeologist, and personal techniques for matching archival resources to the needs of historical archaeology have produced a cornerstone for reinterpreting the English colonial effort in the early 17th Century. This is a cru-

cial effort for two reasons. South, Deetz, and Hume are the key historical archaeologists working in America today. There are others but these three are among the most famous. And second, they are not...manifestly not...recovering the roots of what we conventionally understand to be American colonial society. All three are dealing with data from a period so strange, so different, and so unrelated to 18th Century colonial America, that it is time to say they are dealing with another culture.

It is also just the time to say that they are not dealing with just an earlier version of our past, or a society eventually to evolve into our own, or one which was a primitive or an early American society. To say this in any of its forms would be to perpetuate bankrupt ways of interpreting the past and to rob ourselves of a chance to see societies utterly and completely different from the conventional picture we have of our own beginnings. Here, in avoiding seeing the 16th and early 17th Century settlement of America as little versions of the 18th Century or of today is a real chance to see a different view of American beginnings.

The poverty of the current approach to the American past and the tiny role historical archaeology plays within it are best seen in Rhys Isaac's *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790*. This book published in 1982 is so far the premier statement to come out of what scholars agree is a renaissance in Chesapeake history. The quality of scholarship devoted to the Chesapeake area is at an unparalleled level today and has been for a decade. Within this scholarship, particularly as seen in Isaac's books, the contributions of historical archaeology have been minimal. Even though there has been a lot of digging and even though Isaac has read the results, the archaeology contributes little to a better understanding of the Chesapeake.

Second, virtually all the scholarship leads to the same place: the transformation of a vibrant colonial enterprise into the dying and dead South of the 19th and 20th Centuries. Chesapeake history inevitably leads to the answer to the question: why did the South take the wrong turn, bet on the wrong economic system, lose the Civil War, establish a racist society, or, in short, why did the South lose and die. As a whole society, why did it become a second class part of America? These are the questions which compose the backbone of much, if not all, the research done in the renaissance of Chesapeake history.

The questions are legitimate and important. But, most important, the answers to them do not lie in the 16th and early 17th Centuries; they may lie in the 18th Century but they do not lie in the excavations of South, Deetz, or Hume. The societies those men are excavating did not and should not be made to lead to these questions. Pushing the questions back into earlier eras perpetuates the questions, continues the identity of the South as second class, and robs us all of the opportunity as archaeologists and citizens to form a new identity for an area which is

becoming the economic and political core of the United States.

In focusing on Santa Elena in South Carolina and Flowerdew and Martin's Hundreds I have not deliberately excluded other excavations of historical materials or deliberately stuck to the lower southeast coast. My point, however, in including what I have is two fold. The 1980 U. S. census revealed two facts of significance given my argument that historical archaeology as anthropology needs to be linked to public interpretation. One fact is that the economic and political center of the United States is shifting from the Northeast to the South and Southwest, from the Frostbelt to the Sunbelt. And second, by the year 2000 half or more of the U. S. population will speak Spanish. Now these are interesting facts especially when viewed in context of what was done when the United States faced a similar shift in the 19th Century.

If the American population center is to be redefined, then it is appropriate to examine how New England and the Northeast handled the influx of Catholic Southern Europeans and many others who did not share the area's traditions throughout the 19th Century. New England and the Northeast created the story we all now share of where America came from: where its virtues, the key American character traits, the core of its religion, the origins of all these things, and their development, all had their beginnings. The myth of American origins is a 19th Century creation. The typical American village with church, houses, and green did not exist until the early 19th Century; neither did historic homes, the heroes who lived in them, historic monuments, genealogical societies, George Washington and cherrytree integrity, nor the schoolbooks to teach all this and the million knick-nacks and prints to memorialize early New England as the true home of American origins.

It is very significant for policy making professionals to link the deliberate creation of a story of American beginnings to the shift in power now happening in the United States. The link must include the 16th and early 17th century archaeological sites now being excavated as well as what Mr. Robbins, the pharmaceutical manufacturer, did to Rochambeau and Lafayette... or, more to the point, did not do: he tried to give them meaning and he failed.

The revisionist and radical historians have all pointed out that history is a product, not of the data described, but of the time and era that writes, publishes, and reads it. At the very least this is a 19th Century insight seemingly known to all. Historians have not only spent the last 20 years revising much of American history, but in demonstrating that historical interpretations themselves are artifacts demonstrating the characteristics of the ages in which they were written and accepted. So, Ruth Elson's classic analysis of American schoolbooks of the 19th Century showed as clearly as anything could how and why America came to think of its own history and thus of itself.

Such studies are legion, and while schoolbooks were and re-

main one of the prime vehicles for creating and perpetuating self-identity, today outdoor history museums and farms use living history exhibits and films as a major vehicle for this task. Now if one takes the South including Texas and looks at the economic and demographic forecast one can see it has the wrong history. And if one looks at the Southwest and its forecasts, one can see the same thing. The conventional, historically grounded view of these areas is useless. The question is not whether the histories are accurate, the question is whether they tell you or the occupants anything anyone needs to know. And the answer is, they don't.

Southern historically-grounded identity is composed of hierarchy, gentility, race, and defeat. This identity is communicated ...and frequently lived out...as a combination of a yearning for a vanished past and an idiosyncratic contrariness which defies cooperation. This identity is willingly perpetuated by both North and South as well as by historians, who true as always to culture's questions, want to know how all these taken-for-granted facts came to be.

To say the least, this identity does the South no good. Like all identity it is a manufacture and like all regions, which undergo profound change, the South's and Southwest's identity will be profoundly altered soon. The case in the Southwest is bound to be radical. From a Northeastern point of view the Southwest has hardly any history. In the popular mind California, Arizona and their sister states only became important with the Second World War. If the popular mind gives the Southwest anything beyond that, it is a mix of Indians, deserts, and frontier forts, and maybe some ruins, some Mexicans, and some friars of uncertain but probably Medieval denomination. At any rate they aren't Catholic.

It is not too much to propose that a new identity for this huge part of the United States be planned. Whether that planning should be public or private or both is probably irrelevant. But let us think a moment about planning it. The archaeological data for radically different origins exist. They haven't been given traditional interpretations yet. The museum settings, which reach the public very effectively, are there too. And the archaeologists who contribute to this effort are almost all anthropologists, who by training understand the function and operation of myth, ritual, and personal as well as national identity. Certainly none would dismiss these parts of society as irrelevant or inconsequential.

The idea I am suggesting be considered within an anthropological historical archaeology is that it understand that the questions it asks and the answers it finds be thought of, for example, the way Macauley considered English history: for a mass audience. Archaeology has such an audience anyway; it ought to be spoken to, the way Macauley spoke to contemporary Britains, as people who ought to know about their own history so that their opinions, values, virtues...their identity...could be

shaped. Doing this deliberately is not evil, is not novel, and can be quite constructive. Archaeology reaches the public now in a variety of ways, including outdoor museums, one vehicle historical archaeologists could influence easily and directly.

Two steps are needed to do this. The first is to understand that molding opinion of self and nation is a process as scientific as archaeology itself. It is well-known and is done all the time. Museum curators and designers are deeply aware of the process and they have gone well beyond the three primitive epistemologies I outlined earlier. The second step is itself two fold. What should the new identity be and how should it be communicated?

I do not know what it SHOULD be, but consider that the 17th Century in Maryland and Virginia were Anglican...not Puritan, capitalistic...not communitarian, had fractured family lives...not the even generational development of New England, and were societies not preoccupied with that wonderful trio: sin, guilt, and precedent. In New England, sin was discovered by examination of self and others using the technique of identifying guilt. A record of sin and salvation from it composed the events of one's life and thus a personal history. References to the past became a mode of discourse in New England. None of that was true in what the historian Breen has called the land of adventurers. Everybody in Virginia from John Smith to Thomas Jefferson was amazed at his fellows' unconcern with personal responsibility, institutional development, or keeping the region's history. Both men saw the beginning of an individualism untied to the past or to neighbors, institutions, or even to given pieces of land.

If any of this proposal merits consideration, the tie between the data of the 17th Century and the needs of today suggests that there is a very strong resemblance between profit making, family fragmentation, mobility, and the uselessness of precedent found now and in the 17th Century southern colonies.

I admit that such an identity is fairly unwelcome and probably could not be celebrated. But it could be explained by showing that early and advanced capitalism created similar conditions and that America's economic system composed of elements like individualism, entrepreneurism, and freedom from the ties of history have beginnings not in New England, but in the South. And lo and behold, these very important features of our system really do have their origins in the South and could just be reemerging. So, the real job of an anthropologically constituted historical archaeology would be to explore the roots of the modern system and put forth the interpretation in such a way that the scientific merits of the discoveries are preserved.

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