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Introduction

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Editor's Introduction

David B. Landon

It is a great pleasure to introduce Volume 33 of *Northeast Historical Archaeology*. This is the first time we are publishing CNEHA awards in the journal, which provides the distinct pleasure of honoring Paul Huey, Lois Feister, and Mary Beaudry in the journal. Their many contributions to the Council and to the advancement of historical archaeology scholarship in the Northeast provide an example for the rest of us.

This volume also highlights the accomplishments of the next generation of historical archaeologists. Each year the annual conference includes a student paper competition, where the winner gets to submit her or his paper to the journal for review and publication. Four of the articles in this volume—those of Bain, Beranek, Breen, and MacDonald—are from competition winners at four different conferences. Despite their diverse topics, these papers are united by their empirical sophistication, close attention to site context, and thoughtful use of historical data. It is a great pleasure to include all of these papers in the volume.

As a collection, the papers in this volume reflect the geographic and topical diversity that characterizes scholarship in the discipline. Beranek's paper explores the material life of the Tyng family, a member of Massachusetts' rural elite. The family maintained social and kinship ties with the merchant elite in the major port cities, but used material culture to express their social position in distinct ways that differed from coastal merchants. MacDonald's paper also examines the use of material culture to express a distinct identity, but in this case the ethnic identity of German-Canadians. Her paper interconnects a detailed analysis of vessel form representation and foodways to examine how aspects of artifact assemblages—especially ceramics and glass—reflect maintenance of German dietary practices. White's paper follows these two, using a richly detailed analysis of buttons, watch parts, shoe buckles, and other "small finds" to investigate how occupants of the Warner House, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, presented themselves and conveyed aspects of their class and gender identities.

Waller's paper takes us to the analysis of historic cemeteries and the factors influencing the preservation of human skeletal remains. Vastly different skeletal preservation at two cemeteries in Rhode Island appears to be largely the result of local-scale environmental variation in soil texture and water percolation, not just broad characteristics of soil pH. While clearly of relevance for cemetery excavation, this article also presents a compelling case for linking questions of differential preservation to a careful consideration of environmental characteristics of individual site contexts. Bain's article also

takes an archaeobiological tack, reviewing the archaeological evidence for lice, bedbugs, and fleas. Archaeologists have recovered remains of these critters from sites in the Northeast and Bain's work should encourage us to collect appropriate samples from our sites and look for these remains.

The article by Bailey, Lawrence, and Schopp uses material culture from a 19th-century rural laborers' house in Pennsylvania to explore the changing fortunes of the house occupants through the economic transitions of the period. Poor, rural, tenant farm workers appear to have shared much of the material life of neighboring landowners. Semi-skilled workers later in the century seem to have a richer material life, but this seems to have come at the cost of low-level debt to store keepers. In the following article Breen also investigates the change through time in the artifact assemblage from a specific site, in this case Mount Vernon. She carries out a detailed seriation analysis of vessel forms and ware types to sub-divide the ceramic assemblage from a single midden, linking specific deposition layers with particular households at Mount Vernon. As a graduate student Breen worked as an editorial assistant for the journal, and it has been very gratifying to be able to continue working with her on publishing her research.

The last two articles highlight the potential of our archaeological work to bring to light the stories of the dispossessed and disenfranchised. Delle and Levine present the results of urban salvage excavations in downtown Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Excavations in the backlot of property owned by Thaddeus Stevens and Lydia Hamilton Smith uncovered a complex of features, including a cistern modified with the addition of a ventilation hole at the top and a tunnel connecting it to the basement of a building. With thorough dating of the archaeological deposits and detailed consideration of Stevens and Smith's lives, they craft a careful argument that this cistern was used as a hiding place for fugitive slaves traveling the Underground Railroad. Triggs' article shifts the focus to Ontario, and the late-18th- and early-19th-century fur trade site of Beasley's Landing. He studies ceramics, faunal remains, trade beads, and other artifacts from a series of temporally and functionally distinct contexts to understand the declining fortunes of the native inhabitants of the area, the Mississauga. Dispossession from their traditional lands and the collapse of the regional fur trade had profound cultural implications for the Mississauga, and Triggs tracks their changing status from important trading partners to one of many "Indian allies" drawn into the wars between the colonial powers.

Finally, this volume closes with a collection of book reviews by Baugher, Brighton, and Desjardins. They consider a diverse range of books, and provide very useful information to help us keep abreast of the burgeoning scholarship in historical archaeology.

Enjoy your reading!