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Editor's Introduction

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Editors' Introduction

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I am most pleased to offer CNEHA members a truly fascinating and varied issue of the journal. Volume 28 begins with a review by Charlotte Wilcoxon, a ceramic historian, of her research on the distribution of Portuguese faiança on American colonial sites. Even though this ware never comprises a particularly high percentage of the ceramics recovered from a site, its widespread occurrence on 17th-century North American sites is intriguing. Wilcoxon suspects that it is more common than most archaeologists realize, and offers a guide to recognizing the ware. To make such identifications perhaps easier, we have included a set of color images of sherds from New England sites. This is our first venture into including color illustrations inside the journal, and we hope that in future color images will appear regularly.

We move from 17th-century trade in Portuguese ceramics to drinking in the workplace. At the Central Railroad's shops in Lakehurst, New Jersey, Richard Veit and Paul Schopp found extensive evidence on on-site drinking by railway maintenance workers. They examine the contexts in which beverage alcohol containers were found as well as the circumstances under which on-the-job drinking likely occurred. Here we see an archaeology of the workplace that reveals much about the conditions of labor and the development of worker solidarity in the face of company disregard.

Kathleen Wheeler applies a feminist perspective and a detailed analysis of site formation processes to the interpretation of the effects that women had upon the archaeological record. Wheeler maintains that open yard middens must be analyzed in conjunction with sealed shaft features such as privies, and that privies must be viewed as repositories of multiple depositions representing household transition over time. Wheeler's work draws together several lines of thought about exploring gender through archaeology and offers a carefully designed strategy for interpreting (and, in some cases, reinterpreting) women's lives through archaeological data.

Winner of the 1997 Student Paper Prize at the CNEHA meetings in Altoona, Pennsylvania, Pauline Desjardins's article on the Lachine Canal explores one aspect of the results of her long-term research into this important element of Montreal's built environment. She discovered evidence of many short railways linking the banks of the canal to private business premises ranged along it nearby. This is the first known North American example of such primitive wooden railways, and Desjardins offers a comprehensive discussion of their nature in hopes that other archaeologists will be alert to the possibility of similar discoveries elsewhere.

David Starbuck, one of the most prolific of CNEHA authors and dedicated military sites archaeologist, steps back from his own research briefly to provide us a fascinating glimpse of the early years of excavating military sites in the Northeast. He does this through an interview with Richard Koke, who worked with the famous team of Calver and Bolton and was responsible for compiling the articles that comprise the well-known volume, *History Written with Pick and Shovel*. This gives us a most intriguing glimpse at the formative years of historical archaeology in our region.

The last of our articles returns us to a consideration of the archaeology of the workplace. David Landon offers the Ohio Trap Rock Site on the Upper Peninsula of Michigan as a case study to challenge recent interpretations of worker home life as deeply affected by conditions in the workplace, especially the changing technologies. Landon's example shows little or no connection between what can be learned about technology and work patterns through archaeology of the industrial workplace and what can be gleaned about worker home life through investigation of worker housing. His findings have broad applicability to industrial sites throughout the Northeast.

Our book review section is the longest ever, and I hope that you will be intrigued and challenged by the unvarnished opinions of our reviewers and seek out for yourself the books they review for your own inspection.

All in all, this is surely an issue of substance and wide interest.