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## Book Review: Historical Archaeologies of Capitalism, edited by Mark P. Leone and Parker B. Potter, Jr.

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that the House of Seven Gables survived this process. It was an impressive 17th-century home but it lacked the order, symmetry, and elegance the Turner family required in the 18th century. Indeed, in the 1740s John Turner III built a new mansion house and the old homestead was relegated to a summer home and center of family business activity. Ironically, the high cost of the house, its grand furnishings and lavish entertainments would help precipitate the family's financial ruin.

While this is a well written and serious work, Goodwin's sense of humor occasionally shines through to keep a potentially dull topic lively and enjoyable. This can be seen when she is talking about the "crudest hicks from the provincial sticks" or quoting Erasmus's advice that "it is boorish to plunge your hands into sauced dishes." I have few complaints with this work. A couple of the sources seem dated, particularly Thomas Wertenbaker and Carl Bridenbaugh, prominent scholars of the 1930s and 1940s whose work has been largely superceded by recent social and cultural historians. Yet, these authorities are not extensively relied on, and overall the citations demonstrate a thorough grasp of the literature. A more significant concern is that like so many recent archaeological monographs, it is only available in an expensive hardcover format. As such, it is inaccessible to students, and it is just the sort of work they should read. It shows the potential of the field to take overlooked aspects of the past and to synthesize many lines of research into valuable new interpretations.

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**HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGIES OF CAPITALISM,**  
edited by Mark P. Leone and Parker B.  
Potter, Jr. 1999, Kluwer Academic/ Plenum  
Publishers, New York, 262 pages, illus.,  
\$85.00 (hardcover).

Reviewed by LouAnn Wurst

Mark Leone and Parker Potter, the editors of *Historical Archaeologies of Capitalism* and their contributors, do not mince words about their vision of the nature of historical archaeology; for them, historical archaeology is about capitalism. Period.

For me, this volume is refreshing since I have been disturbed by the general lack of theory—particularly that confronting capitalism—in current historical archaeological literature. A historical archaeologist told me that we have become the "Nike Generation;" we have already done the theory, now all that is left is to "just do it"—the archaeology. This comment is both amusing and disturbing. How quickly one rushes for an advertising jingle from a global capitalist company which is notorious in their exploitation of their labor force. And, pretending that we have worked out our theoretical problems, and that we simply have to "do it" is naive. Recent statements that define historical archaeology as the benign intersection of material culture and textual evidence, or as rooted in the role of individual agency lose sight of the political nature of our work.

The historical archaeology of capitalism, as described in this book, is gloriously political and is exactly why I became a historical archaeologist. Since, as the authors acknowledge, our questions as scholars come from our own social setting within American society, it should come as no surprise that my reaction to this book arises from my own experience and social context. My father was a construction worker who dropped out of school in the seventh grade to go to work. He started out driving a dump truck and ultimately ended his career as a crane operator. My father was a staunch union man and today I find it delicious irony that the union that he belonged to for over 30 years, the International Union of Operating Engineers, is the same union that represents the Archaeological Field Technicians. My mother was a registered nurse who

went back to work full time soon after I was born. Perhaps my experiences growing up in a working class household make it easier for me to pierce dominant capitalist ideology. Maybe not. But it is clear that research agendas driven by ideas like social mobility, equality of opportunity, the gendered division of labor based on separate spheres, or even an emphasis on meaning based on textual and thus literate understandings have very little salience for my family and thousands like them.

*Historical Archaeologies of Capitalism* is organized into four parts. The first part tackles issues in a historical archaeology that is devoted to the study of capitalism. A single article by Mark Leone comprises this section, and provides an amazingly accessible and succinct summary of capitalism. Leone addresses some of the dominant themes that relate to a historical archaeology of capitalism such as advocacy, ideology, consciousness, commodity fetishism, and consumption.

The second section, containing articles by Wylie, Potter, and Epperson, is framed by the issue of where our questions come from. Wylie passionately argues that we have to study capitalism if we are to understand and provide alternatives to the present which is based on exploitative social relations. Accepting this as given, Wylie addresses the implications of this statement for methodologies of historical archaeology. She provides a valuable discussion of the relationship between material culture and text that makes our common notions of evidential independence a difficult position to sustain. Fundamentally, the issue is not text versus material culture, but what the various lines of evidence tell us about life in the past. I hope everyone takes Wylie's statements to heart so that we can finally move beyond the history versus archaeology debate once and for all.

Potter's contribution to this volume deals with the issue of identity in modern America, and attempts to extend the definition of our field to include the historical archaeology of identity. While I can certainly appreciate this goal, Potter's tone struck me as being apologetic; an attempt to provide validity and authenticity to middle-class experience. This article is not really in keeping with the rest of

the volume. His argument also does not fit the overall goal of exposing capitalism's inherent relations of exploitation and inequality.

Terry Epperson's article, concerning the social construction of race, gets us back on track. Epperson provides an elegant statement of the social construction of race and how race relations have been transformed through time. He reminds us that racial identities can serve simultaneously as the means of oppression and a basis for resistance and that we have to be careful since our efforts to deconstruct essentialist concepts can also have the effect of undermining powerful counter-hegemonic identity-based political actions that are built on these concepts.

The third section of the book includes case studies that integrate concepts of impoverishment and capitalism, and force us to confront the fact that the families who may have lived on our isolated, individual sites, always existed within a complex multi-scalar set of relations based on capitalism. Profit begets poverty and "those without history are deliberately dispossessed, cursed, and cheated" (p. 111). All of the authors in this section challenge us to develop creative ways to integrate archaeological data, although with various levels of success. Margaret Purser addresses issues of capitalism in the late 19th-century western United States and the methodological problems that arise from studying mass-produced artifacts. I agree with Purser that "it has proved much easier to categorize the material culture of Capitalism than to analyze it" (p. 124). Following Purser, we must recognize that methodological creativity and interpretive flexibility will allow us to deal with the complexity and variability of our subject (p. 137). If a cookie cutter would really work, we would already have accomplished our task. Paul Mullins provides an insightful interpretation of African-American use of brand-name products. Instead of dusty interpretations such as assimilation or integration into the dominant economy, Mullins suggests that African Americans actively chose brand-name products to avoid being cheated by local store keepers and thus racial exploitation.

Charles Orser follows the "index approach" to historical archaeology by examining the purchasing power of various groups

in the southern agricultural class structure. Orser assumes that the rigid class structure of southern agriculture would imply that "members of each tenure class would have roughly the same access to portable goods" (p. 159), and that material differences, evident in the archaeological record, would stem from these class differences. It is not clear to me whether the fact that Orser's results were ambiguous relates to the fact that we have yet to define clear material distinctions among these classes, or if this is in reality not a particularly fruitful goal. In either case, facing tenancy and the realities of agricultural class structures is essential to understanding capitalism. Creating new essentialized categories may not actually further that goal. Mark Leone also follows an "index approach" in his analysis of ceramics from Annapolis. Leone uses an index of ceramic variability from five sites in Annapolis to examine ideological issues of individualism and the advent of time routines and work disciplines that are characteristic of capitalism. The results show a great deal of variation among sites, indicating to Leone a great deal of variability in how households were integrated into the capitalist system. I was not swayed by these modest results, particularly since the site assemblages utilized cover vast expanses of time, such as 1790–1852 and 1852–1929 for the Charles Carroll house (p. 208). Leone's conceptualization of ideology, virtually unchanged since the William Paca article 16 years ago, also hit a nerve. I find his claim that "the ideology of individualism is at the heart of why people work within the exploitation that capitalism often produces" (p. 212) to be facile and simplistic. His treatment of the impenetrability of ideology reminded me of my father's favorite joke:

On his last day of work before retiring, Joe was walking past security. The guard says; "OK Joe, you've been coming out of here every day with a tarp covered wheelbarrow, and every day I check to make sure you're not stealing something. Now, I know you've been stealing, just tell me what it was." Joe replies, "I've been stealing wheelbarrows."

The guy stealing wheelbarrows, my father, and probably most working-class individuals knew and know exactly how and by whom they are being exploited. They just didn't know what to do about it.

The final section of the book, titled "Beyond North America," contains a single article by Matthew Johnson. Johnson does a nice job wrapping up the volume by highlighting several key issues: space, time, context, material culture, and politics, and emphasizes that these issues are central to "the practice of archaeology in all areas and places" (p. 219). Johnson reminds us that a focus on capitalism does not imply only the United States, and talks about the long historical development of capitalism in England. I would have liked to see more of a global perspective in this section—indeed the title led me to expect more than just a nod to non-western capitalist contexts.

I would like to add one final caution that addresses the sense of plurality in the title. I am afraid that the recognition of archaeologies of capitalism, while clearly situated within post-processual developments, may ultimately make it difficult to recognize the unity of our goal. The term "Capitalism" implies a structure that either is or is not, and therefore the archaeologies of capitalism cannot be plural. The form that capitalism takes in any real historical context, however, is relational and thus multifarious. It is this process that contains the plurality; plurality is not inherent in the structure itself or in our unified goal to understand that structure as historical archaeologists. The way we approach this task must be relational, historical, multi-scalar, and plural. To me, the variability in the "faces that capitalism wears locally" does not imply different or multiple archaeologies, but different sites, scales of analysis, and methodologies. To be truly radical, historical archaeology must focus on the singularity of Capitalism so that our target does not waver. In many ways, I think that it is the singularity and monolithic nature of the structure that makes ideology so powerful and why conceptualizing change is so difficult. This is why stealing wheelbarrows can be resistance, providing the only option

for satisfaction that most working class people have, without being revolutionary. It would be dangerous to lose sight of this.

The historical archaeology of capitalism as advocated in this book is nothing new; we have all heard it all before. Whether we accept it or not, this is how the field must be defined. Attempts to construct a de-politicized definition, whether framed as the intersection of material culture and text, or based on the role of individual agency, is doomed to fail. The final question has to ultimately be whether our research will support capitalism or critique it. I suggest we "just do it."

LouAnn is an Assistant Professor in the Anthropology Department at SUNY College at Brockport. Her research has focused on issues of class, gender, and consumption in 19th- and early 20th-century rural and urban contexts in the Northeast United States. She has recently been researching the development of tourism and service industries and transformations in domestic food preservation technology.

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**CULTURAL RESOURCE LAWS AND PRACTICE: AN INTRODUCTORY GUIDE**, by **Thomas F. King**  
1998, Altamira Press, Walnut Creek, CA. 303 pages, 9 figures, \$46.00 (cloth); \$22.95 (paper).

Reviewed by James Symonds

*Cultural Resource Laws and Practice* is the first volume in a new series entitled Heritage Resources Management, from the University of Nevada, Reno. On the inside of the dust cover the series editor, Don Fowler, proudly tells us that the series is based upon successful seminars sponsored by the University of Nevada and that the individual volumes have been designed to serve as "workshops

between book covers." Herein we will find case studies, worksheets, and checklists, along with "worldly advice" from experienced CRM professionals.

Thomas King rises to this challenge with panache and an idiosyncratic flamboyance. The book covers the field of CRM systematically, under three broad section headings: "Background and Overview;" "Law and Practice;" and "Bringing It All Together." King defines the intended scope of his book in the introductory chapter. This is not a legal reference book, *per se*, although useful appendices are included covering "Abbreviations, Definitions," "Laws, Executive Orders," "Regulations," a "Model Section 106 Memorandum of Agreement," and a "Model NAGPRA Plan of Action." Readers in search of the full texts of laws or regulations are sensibly advised to consult the World Wide Web. Nor is this intended to be a cookbook that contains a series of recipes or how-to strategies: "For such people I'd suggest culinary school rather than CRM, although I think you'll find that even the temperature at which water boils depends on the altitude," King comments dryly (p. 11). Instead, the book sets out to examine the *process* of CRM: how, given the constellation of legislation, regulations, and contingent issues, "possibilities get explored, selected, and implemented" (p. 11).

Inasmuch as all CRM is essentially the management of change (and this includes paradigmatic perspectives) *Cultural Resource Laws and Practice* is presented as a contribution to an ongoing debate, replacing King's earlier co-authored text (King, Hickman, and Berg 1977) and supplementing a body of related theory (Murtagh 1977; Fitch 1982; Stipe and Lee 1987; Cantor 1996; Burdge 1994). Although the book is primarily intended as a text for college and university students, including continuing education classes, it is also regarded by the author as being of interest to a wider audience: "environmental and historic preservation personnel in federal and state agencies, local governments, and Indian tribes, and consultants in environmental and historic preservation work" (p. 5).

So how far does King succeed in his attempt to guide the reader through the labyrinth of cultural resource laws and prac-