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## Book Review: Archaeology of the War of 1812, ed. by Michael T. Lucas and Julie M. Schablitsky

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demystify and analyze and evaluate these mythic histories? I applaud the editors and authors for highlighting the diversity and multivocality that characterize the Delaware Valley without entering the fray over origins. Those contests, I fear, result in histories that are too simplistic and overdetermined to be of much scholarly value.

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**ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE WAR OF 1812, ed. by Michael T. Lucas and Julie M. Schablitsky, 2014, Left Coast Press, Walnut Creek, CA, 337 pp., 15 chapters with bibliographies, 52 figures, 10 tables, index, \$79.00 (cloth).**

Reviewed by Joseph H. Last

As noted by Julie Schablitsky and Michael Lucas in their introduction to this volume, *Archaeology of the War of 1812* differs from previous collections on the War of 1812 in that the scope of this work is neither site type nor region specific. Within its 15 chapters, readers will find investigations of fortifications, encampments, battlefields, and shipwrecks. Geographically the volume is as varied involving studies in the North (Great Lakes and Lake Champlain-Richelieu River Valley), the Old Northwest, the Chesapeake, the Southeast, and the Gulf regions of conflict.

Although the study areas and site types are diverse, the methodologies employed by the contributors and their principle goals of research share a commonality that gives unity to the volume. Each investigation relied heavily on historic research during all phases of the projects and every chapter begins with an historic overview of the study area in question. This format is mirrored further by John Grodzinski and Ralph Eshelman's succinct review of the causes and primary campaigns of the War of 1812. Preceding the chapters on archaeological findings, the overview provides historical context for the volume as a whole.

The primary goals of the investigations were site specific but generally sought to answer questions regarding site location and

extent, resource integrity, intra-site activities and layout, soldiers' life style, and the influence of landscape on military activities, manoeuvres, and defence. Three of the chapters involve extant fortifications. Eva MacDonald, David Spittal, and David Robertson summarize 40 years of archaeological endeavour at Fort York, Toronto. While doing so, they describe their quest to find the crater formed during the April 27, 1813 explosion of the Grand Magazine. Arguably, one of the most evocative features created during the War in Canada, its discovery has enhanced public understanding of the devastation caused by this 'forgotten war.' Susan Maguire's chapter on Old Fort Niagara, Youngstown, New York, presents an in-depth account of the exploration of the Red Barracks and its successive occupation by American and British armies. She discusses, through material culture analysis, soldiers' use of domestic items, their uniforms and arms, and the difficulties in solely ascribing, save for uniform buttons, the assemblage to either American or British forces. In a fascinating study of the defensive alterations made to Fort McHenry, Baltimore, Charles Cheek, Joseph Balicki, and David Orr provide the rationale for the construction, modifications, and strategies employed, set within the larger context of coastal fortification design.

Two chapters focus on the investigations of encampments. Timothy Abel discusses work undertaken at Cantonment Saranac, Plattsburgh, New York. Employing metal detectors to recover diagnostic military artifacts, he and his crew spent three years investigating the charred remains of a soldier's cabin, possibly inhabited by an Officer of the 15th Regiment of Infantry. The 12 x 15 ft. log structure had two fire hearths, one at each gable, a patio or stoop, and apparently an earthen floor. Significantly, Abel's findings represent the only known archaeologically documented War of 1812 cantonment structure to date. Michael Lucas and Emily Swain, working in Nottingham, Maryland, also used a metal detector survey to retrieve and plot arms-related items (primarily 0.63 to 0.70 calibre musket balls, lead shot, musket worms, flint foils, and bayonets). Subsequent geophysical testing resulted in identifying a portion of the British 1814 encampment.

Five chapters of this volume are dedicated to battlefield archaeology. Each project utilized

similar methods: developing a GIS database, metal detecting, geophysical survey, soil coring and excavation. Noel Broadbent and Richard Ervin's paper describes the success of these coordinated techniques to pinpoint Commodore Barney's main artillery position at the Bladensburg Battlefield Site in Maryland. In addition, the authors describe their use of KOCOA terrain analysis, a method developed by U.S. military strategists. This technique examines the effect of landscape on battle tactics, both offensive and defensive, and assisted Broadbent and Ervin in determining the most likely positions of the American First, Second, and Third lines; the avenues of the British advance; and that of the American retreat. Similarly, Julie Schablitsky used KOCOA analysis to reconstruct the Battle of Caulk's Field, Maryland. By evaluating how the terrain assisted the American defence and negatively impacted the British advance, a better understanding of the conflict was possible. Through comprehensive integration of the KOCOA analysis and artifact distributions recovered from metal detector surveys, it was possible to determine camps and skirmish lines, patterns of battle-related activities, and battlefield boundaries.

Lacking positive returns from metal detection surveys, collector interviews and First Nation oral history, Christopher Espenshade uniquely adopted KOCOA principles to a marine setting. Through his analysis he was able to reconcile historic accounts and revise the battle narrative of the Battle of Credit Island, Iowa, which was the last battle fought for the control of the Upper Mississippi River during the War of 1812. Patrick O'Neill's chapter outlines his research and use of squadron ship logs to reassess the duration and magnitude of the British bombardment during the Battle of the White House landing, Virginia. Lasting five days, it is one of the longest artillery barrages of the war. Through plotting the distribution of canister shot, grape shot, and mortar shell fragments recovered from metal detector survey, the extent of the battlefield and the location of several gun emplacements are proposed. John Cornelison Jr. and David Lowe present a masterful analysis of the Battle of New Orleans. Using data provided by metal detection surveys and systematic shovel testing, they were able to construct GIS and Surfer maps

indicating fields of fire and the intensity of the engagement, as well as defining the location of the British Brigadier General Sir Edward Pakenham's attack.

Two chapters focus on locating defensive works. Timothy Baumann, John Peterson, and Michael Dickey used geophysical testing, auger tests, excavation and plough zone stripping to locate War of 1812 features associated with Fort Osage (1808-1827), near Kansas City, Missouri. Two middens containing arms and military items (shot, flints, and uniform buttons) were unearthed attesting to the presence of American troops in what was the westernmost American post and trading factory. C. Scott Butler provides a summary of his work at Point Peter, Georgia, the site of a battery and redoubt/blockhouse. Shovel test pitting resulted in the recovery of military-related artifacts, the remains of at least two barracks, an associated midden, privy, and well. The investigation confirmed the documented deficiencies of supplies. Of the 606 regimental buttons retrieved, none was representative of the most recent pattern issue. In addition, the excavations shed light on the daily life of the garrison, providing information about foodways and patterns of refuse disposal.

Robert Neyland and Jeffery Enright provide the only chapter involving a marine investigation. Examining the Chesapeake Bay Naval flotilla, they offer analysis and identify two of the Jeffersonian gunboats scuttled by Barney during his escape from the British Royal Navy. By examining the structural elements, framing pattern, and dimensions of the vessels, they were able to identify the gunboats with confidence and importantly, to document the construction, arming, and provisioning of two vessels that formed part of the nascent American Navy during the War of 1812. David Orr offers his concluding thoughts in the final chapter of the volume. As always, his is a thoughtful and compelling discussion on the nature and impact of the War of 1812 and the value of archaeological investigation.

Within the volume, various authors discuss the difficulties in undertaking archaeological research on military sites and battlefields. First, there is the ethereal nature of the archaeological record, especially in regards to skirmishes and engagements of short duration. Then there is the question of site integrity given the impacts presented by urbanization

and development. Even on relatively preserved sites, it is often difficult to isolate diagnostic items that can confidently ascribe an occupation or activity to one or either of the opposing forces.

Despite these inherent difficulties, *Archaeology of the War of 1812* demonstrates the power of archaeological investigation to contribute to our understanding of the war, be it through physically defining the location of conflict, enhancing our appreciation of the magnitude and scope of this war, or by reconciling historic accounts and revising battle narratives. Iconic heroes, courageous deeds, shrines and sacred soil arose from the War of 1812. This volume demonstrates that historical archaeology can assist in commemorating its people, places, and events. *Archaeology of the War of 1812* is an enjoyable and informative read illustrating the breadth of recent scholarly research. Varied in both geography and site types, it provides a rare archaeological overview of the War and as a result would be of interest to anyone engaged in the study of the War of 1812.

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