

Northeast Historical Archaeology

Volume 25

Article 1

1996

Editor's Introduction

Mary C. Beaudry

Follow this and additional works at: <http://orb.binghamton.edu/neha>



Part of the [Archaeological Anthropology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Beaudry, Mary C. (1996) "Editor's Introduction," *Northeast Historical Archaeology*: Vol. 25 25, Article 1.
<https://doi.org/10.22191/neha/vol25/iss1/1> Available at: <http://orb.binghamton.edu/neha/vol25/iss1/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). It has been accepted for inclusion in Northeast Historical Archaeology by an authorized editor of The Open Repository @ Binghamton (The ORB). For more information, please contact ORB@binghamton.edu.

Editors' Introduction

In this issue we are pleased to present several articles of considerable interest to our readers, not the least of which is a forum on the treatment of historical graves. Jim Garman, in his article "This Church is for the Living," presents case studies of two cemetery removal projects in which he was involved. He expresses his concerns about archaeologists' participation in such projects, particularly because he views the archaeologist's actions as complicit with interests that rob the dead of their right to sepulture. Yet he notes that the dilemma is compounded by the fact that, in the past, it was common for burials to be moved by family members or by churches and cemetery authorities. Is the current concern for sepulture a late 20th-century sensibility that would have seemed alien to our forebears and divergent from their notions of appropriate treatment of the dead? It is an interesting question, but contemporary archaeological practice takes place within the framework of current legislation and regulation that mandate what actions archaeologists—and others—may take when historic grave sites are threatened by development, church expansion, and so forth. Edward L. Bell of the Massachusetts Historical Commission and Paul Robinson, of the Rhode Island Historic Preservation and Planning Commission, offer responses to Garman's commentary that consider the legislative and regulatory climate in each state, and each reflects on the role of state archaeologists' offices in overseeing cemetery removal projects.

Richard Veit's article, "A Ray of Sunshine in the Sickroom," is a fascinating study of a New Brunswick, New Jersey, deposit containing an assemblage of medical implements and vessels. Even though this deposit had been disturbed by looters, Veit, through careful and wide-ranging research, is able to go beyond identifying the finds and is able to use them to provide insight into 19th-century medical practice in general and, more specifically, into the medical practices of the two physicians who lived at the site.

In their study of the John Jay brickyard, Lois Feister and Joseph Sopko offer a review of the brickmaking process and its archaeological

traces; what is more, their skillful use of documentary sources provides a wealth of detail on the craftsmen and laborers employed in brick-making. Their study, then, offers substantive data for archaeologists interested in industrial process, in labor history, and in the interpretation of bricks as important architectural artifacts.

Bruce Bevan perhaps more than anyone has introduced historical archaeologists to the use of geophysical prospecting techniques. His article in this volume reviews a wide range of projects he has conducted within the confines of National Park Service properties in the eastern U.S. Bevan considers failures as well as successes and offers detailed explanations for why the results of geophysical survey were "good" or "bad" in different situations. His essay serves as a cautionary tale and, more to the point, as a source of the sorts of information an archaeologist needs to consider when determining whether geophysical survey will be a useful tool at his or her site.

Volume 25 closes with Regina Blaszczyk's review essay of two recent works that treat the material culture of armories. She finds much of interest in both Paul Shackel's book on Harper's Ferry and in William Hosley's catalog accompanying the recent Wadsworth Atheneum exhibit on the world of Samuel Colt.

In sum, Volume 25 has a rich and varied content. We've enjoyed working with the authors in bringing these interesting essays to our members.

Volume 25 also represents the final issue in which production my long-term editorial assistant, Ann-Eliza Lewis, will be involved. In the past months she has been training her successor, Cassandra Michaud, in the multitude of tasks required of the editorial assistant—who is indeed the anchor of the editorial office. I thank Ann-Eliza for the enormous contribution she has made to CNEHA and wish her success in her career as she completes her Ph.D.

Mary Beaudry
Editor