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Editor's Introduction

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Editors' Introduction

Volume 26 has been a long time in coming to fruition, and I thank all of our contributors for their patience. As we go to press, however, I can say with some pride that we have a fine issue for our readers, with articles and research notes on varied topics. In this issue we have coverage of nautical archaeology and conservation issues as well as what have been, for us, more traditional topics.

The volume opens with a very nice piece of archaeological detective work by Sherene Baugher and Edward Lenik. They employ a wide variety of documentary and pictorial sources to correctly identify an outbuilding that was an important component of the colonial almshouse complex in New York City. Their work further leads to an understanding of the above-ground appearance of this structure as well as of the evolution of the almshouse complex over time.

Lauren Cook's article arises out of his excellent research on tobacco-related material culture recovered from the Boott Mills boardinghouses site in Lowell, Massachusetts. Here he focuses in on issues of gender and smoking, and suggests ways in which artifacts of tobacco consumption can be interpreted in such a way that women's participation in this activity can be considered. What is more, Cook makes a case for attending to the cultural fields in which tobacco products and material culture were deployed, thereby extending the interpretive potential of artifacts that to date have been valued for their chronological import and as indicators of trade networks.

A most interesting case study in maritime archaeology is the excavation of a coastal schooner, the *Annabella*, by Stefan Claesson. Such vessels were a mainstay of local and regional economies and the main mode of transport for bulk goods between coastal communities well into the 19th century. Little attention has been paid by maritime archaeologists to these workhorses, however, and Claesson's study seeks to remedy the situation. Shipbuilding terms can be rather arcane and technical for the uninitiated, so Claesson has included a glossary as well as ample illustra-

tions to help the non-specialist comprehend how the maritime archaeologist goes about reading the evidence that ship's hulls offer.

Our research notes include a primer on conserving artifacts made of celluloid, by Megan Springate, who also explains how to identify various types of synthetic materials used since the 19th century. Andrew Veech presents a typology for colono ware found in Northern Virginia. Both topics are important, though for wildly different reasons! We hope that Springate's work will be of use to everyone dealing with 19th- and early 20th-century material culture, and that Veech's offering, especially, will prompt response from other scholars grappling with interpretations of colono ware beyond the level of identifying segments of the colonial population that may have engaged in its production.

This issue closes with two timely book reviews. I've noted in the past that we hope to include more reviews as we begin to get the journal on schedule, and we are getting nearer to that goal.

Just as Volume 26 was in the final stages of production, my editorial assistant, Cassandra Michaud, left Boston for a job in Maryland. I want to thank her for all her fine work during her brief tenure, and to welcome my new assistant, Stephen Brighton, who has struggled to learn the ropes quickly so that we could get this volume to the printer and into your hands.

Mary C. Beaudry, Editor