

Historical Archaeology of the Delaware Valley, 1600-1850**Richard Veit and David Orr, editors****University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 2014, 414 pp., images and index, \$54.95 cloth or PDF. ISBN: 1572339977.****DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.14713/njs.v2i1.31>**

Historical Archeology of the Delaware Valley brings together a significant body of scholarship on archeology in the region, both from seasoned veterans in the field as well as new, cutting-edge researchers. Organized chronologically, the volume's fifteen concise chapters begin in the seventeenth century and run through the early nineteenth century. Along the way, readers are introduced to a range of the region's former inhabitants, from the Lenape and Delaware tribes to the first European colonists in what became Delaware and New Jersey, as well as to later waves of German and Quaker migrants. Some sets of chapters take a thematic approach, focusing on the world of work and maritime trade, or exploring the varied material circumstances of different denizens of the region, ranging from the laboring poor to Philadelphia's elite citizens. The result successfully captures the range of peoples, practices, and economies that demarcated the Delaware Valley as a place of particular diversity in North America.

The volume editors start with two explicit goals, to collect in one convenient publication work that is all too often scattered in regional journals or newsletters and technical reports, and to sketch in broad terms the archeological evolution of a region that, despite its historic significance, remains understudied. The first three chapters explore the region's earliest inhabitants. Michael Stewart focuses on indigenous populations, persuasively arguing that cultural continuities outweighed changes in the period of early contact with Europeans. The subsequent two chapters use tightly crafted micro-histories to point to larger trends in early European colonization, as well as evolving archeological techniques. While chapter 2, for

example, centers on the late-nineteenth-century archeological excavation of one of Delaware's earliest Dutch trading posts, it is also about the motivations of Charles Conrad Abbott, the physician, natural scientist, and amateur archeologist who first studied the site. Likewise, Joseph Blondino's chapter on the Marcus Hook Plank House is as much about the benefits of public education regarding the value of historical archeology as it is about the long-overlooked historic structure and what it reveals about early colonial life.

Chapters 5 through 7 are devoted to the region's industrial development, each taking up a different economic enterprise, from glassmaking and small-scale farming, to maritime commerce. Better still, authors draw important connections between goods that were locally produced and traded and how such objects shaped the material circumstances of residents on a daily basis. Teagan Schweitzer's chapter on "The Archeology of Food in Colonial America," for example, offers an excellent case study of the dietary habits of Philadelphia's elite through her careful reconstruction of the table at Stenton, the country home of James Logan, secretary and personal friend of William Penn.

A second cluster of essays, chapters 8 to 11, focus on Philadelphia which, while arguably the best studied aspect of the Delaware Valley, still suffers from a relative lack of archeological analyses, or at least of a corpus of such studies available for easy comparison. And if the geography changes, some of these chapters continue themes from the section before. John Cheoweth's discussion of Quaker purchasing patterns, in which he debunks the myth of steadfast "plainness," for example, echoes Schweitzer's attention to consumption at Stenton. How people dressed themselves, in other words, was as much about self-presentation as what they chose to eat and serve their guests. Even Mara Katkins' study of excavations of Philadelphia's City Almshouse demonstrates how the lowest rungs of the city's residents worked to support

themselves, and chose to spend what meager discretionary income they generated.

A final set of chapters looks at the intersection between the natural and material worlds, and takes the idea of material display to a grander stage. Sarah Chesney's chapter on William Hamilton's greenhouse at Woodlands Estate demonstrates the tenacity of European prototypes on North American architectural trends. Although Hamilton's horticultural collection was vast, including a number of indigenous plants and animals, the building in which he chose to display them took its cue from the latest trends in English—not American—landscape design. Richard Veit and Michael Gall make similar claims in their explication of Point Breeze Estate, the New Jersey country home created by Joseph Bonaparte, Napoleon Bonaparte's older brother, after he was forced to flee to North America following the defeat of Waterloo. His transoceanic relocation notwithstanding, Bonaparte sought to recreate the lifestyle of Europe's elite.

The volume ends with the tantalizing contribution of Christopher Barton, a study of a small African American settlement called Timbuctoo founded in Burlington County, New Jersey in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. And while the volume editors suggest that no one ethnic group dominates the region, Barton's lone essay on African Americans does call—if not for the inclusion of more such studies in this volume—then for more work to be done on the region's early black communities overall. The Delaware Valley occupies an important liminal space, both geographically and ideologically, in North America's early history. It was not like the more homogenous communities of New England, nor like the slave societies of the South. It was, instead, the epicenter of much anti-slavery activism, and served as an important physical gateway for those escaping bondage—either as they passed through or as they incorporated themselves within free black communities in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware. But the region was also, as Barton notes, measured in its implementation of gradual emancipation in

some places. The fraught and complicated relationship of the Delaware Valley to questions of race and freedom, with its attendant questions of autonomy and material circumstances, deserves more attention and points the way for future researchers who build on this volume's strong foundation.

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