



Reflections on the American Experience in Archaeological Perspective Book Series

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Abstract For over five decades historical archaeologists conducting research in the United States have produced important scholarship detailing how the material products and precedents of interactions among people from a multitude of cultural backgrounds created a distinctive plural American society. The American Experience in Archaeological Perspective (AEAP) book series was launched by the University Press of Florida in the early 2000s with the aim of focusing attention on the materiality of the United States as it is differentiated from other nation-states by circumstances of migration, race, class, gender, ethnicity, religion, and other sociohistorical phenomena. A major goal of the series is to reveal how archaeology can interrogate formative aspects of American history and culture—events, institutions, places, practices, and processes—and evaluate their legacies with respect to the country’s present-day social and political circumstances. This essay reflects on the AEAP series and the scholarship produced by its authors over the past two decades. As examples drawn from more than two dozen volumes in the series illustrate, archaeological investigations of the

detritus and landscapes associated with core American values and activities—in all their diversity—provide insights into the foundations of the American experience and what it means to be an American. These studies also provide broad comparisons with historical and anthropological inquiries into lifeways, identity, and national character throughout the world. We conclude with a discussion of the directions the series editors plan to take in publishing the next generation of scholarship in American historical archaeology.

Resumen Durante más de cinco décadas, los arqueólogos históricos que realizan investigaciones en los Estados Unidos han producido estudios importantes que detallan la manera en que los productos materiales y los precedentes de las interacciones entre personas de una multitud de orígenes culturales crearon una sociedad estadounidense plural distintiva. La serie de libros *The American Experience in Archaeological Perspective* (AEAP) fue lanzada por la editorial University Press of Florida a principios de la década de 2000 con el objetivo de centrar la atención en la materialidad de los Estados Unidos, en contraste con otros estados-nación por las circunstancias de la migración, raza, clase, género, etnia, religión y otros fenómenos sociohistóricos. Un objetivo principal de la serie es revelar cómo la arqueología puede interrogar los aspectos formativos de la historia y la cultura estadounidenses (eventos, instituciones, lugares, prácticas y procesos) y evaluar sus legados

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con respecto a las circunstancias sociales y políticas actuales del país. En este ensayo se reflexiona sobre la serie AEAP y los estudios producidos por sus autores durante las últimas dos décadas. Como ilustran los ejemplos extraídos de más de dos docenas de volúmenes de la serie, las investigaciones arqueológicas de los detritos y los paisajes asociados con los valores y actividades estadounidenses centrales, en toda su diversidad, brindan información sobre los cimientos de la experiencia estadounidense y lo que significa ser estadounidense. Estos estudios también proporcionan amplias comparaciones con investigaciones históricas y antropológicas sobre los estilos de vida, identidad y carácter nacional en todo el mundo. Concluimos con una discusión de las direcciones que los editores de la serie planean tomar para publicar la próxima generación de estudios en arqueología histórica estadounidense.

Résumé Au cours de plus de cinq décennies, les archéologiques historiques ayant conduit des recherches aux États-Unis ont produit des travaux importants exposant en détail comment les produits matériels et les interactions antérieures entre des individus issus d'une multitude d'antécédents culturels ont permis la création d'une société américaine plurielle distinctive. La série d'ouvrages *The American Experience in Archaeological Perspective* (AEAP) (L'expérience américaine du point de vue archéologique) a été lancée par la University Press of Florida au début des années 2000 dans l'objectif d'attirer l'attention sur la matérialité des États-Unis en ce qu'ils se différencient des autres états-nations par les circonstances de migration, race, classe, genre, ethnicité, religion et d'autres phénomènes sociohistoriques. Un objectif majeur de la série est de révéler comment l'archéologie peut interroger les aspects formatifs de l'histoire et de la culture américaines, à savoir les événements, institutions, lieux, pratiques et processus, et évaluer leurs transmissions relativement aux circonstances politiques et sociales du temps présent dans le pays. Cet essai est une réflexion sur la série AEAP et les savoirs produits par ses auteurs au cours des deux dernières décennies. Ainsi que les exemples tirés de plus de deux douzaines de volumes de la série l'illustrent, les recherches archéologiques des débris et des paysages associés aux valeurs et activités fondamentales américaines, dans toute leur diversité, apportent des

éclairages sur les fondements de l'expérience américaine et ce que signifie d'être américain. Ces études permettent également des comparaisons générales avec les recherches historiques et anthropologiques sur les modes de vie, l'identité et le caractère national à travers le monde. Nous concluons par une discussion sur les orientations que les éditeurs de la série envisagent de prendre pour la publication de la génération suivante des savoirs en matière d'archéologie historique américaine.

Keywords materiality · nation states · book series · American culture · core values · plural society · foundational experiences · future directions

Introduction

With the development and maturation of the field of historical archaeology, practitioners have turned their material gaze to numerous topics of historical and anthropological interest (Deetz 1977; Schuyler 1980; Falk 1991; Orser 1996; Hicks and Beaudry 2006; Little 2007; Hall and Silliman 2009). While the discipline has become international in scope and grown to meet the exigencies of different times and places (see, e.g., contributions to the *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*), there remains a strong focus on the events that were related to European exploration and settlement in North America and foundational to the establishment of the United States of America (hereafter “America”). Historical archaeology remains grounded in time and space, with its prevailing focus on how local materiality encodes differential circumstances of global phenomena like colonialism, capitalism, migration, and structural racism, to name just a few (Orser 1996; Pezzarossi 2019). Indeed, the field's data are the material remains of “glocalization”—the articulation of global processes at local scales (Nassaney 2015:33). Materials often exhibit similarity due to interactions among their users from the household to the nation-state, even as their differences served to create boundaries.

Although America was forged in the heat of colonial encounters among indigenous groups, eager settlers, and disenfranchised indentured and enslaved peoples from distant homelands, all populations in this pluralistic social experiment have had to grapple with natural and cultural environments in ways that

Table 1 Volumes in the American Experience in Archaeological Perspective book series, 2007–2021, listed chronologically

Title	Reference
<i>The Archaeology of Collective Action</i>	Saitta 2007
<i>The Archaeology of Institutional Confinement</i>	Casella 2007
<i>The Archaeology of Race and Racialization</i>	Orser 2007
<i>The Archaeology of North American Farmsteads</i>	Groover 2008
<i>The Archaeology of Alcohol and Drinking</i>	Smith 2008
<i>The Archaeology of American Labor and Working-Class Life</i>	Shackel 2009
<i>The Archaeology of Clothing and Bodily Adornment in Colonial America</i>	Loren 2010
<i>The Archaeology of American Capitalism</i>	Matthews 2010
<i>The Archaeology of Forts and Battlefields</i>	Starbuck 2011
<i>The Archaeology of Consumer Culture</i>	Mullins 2011
<i>The Archaeology of Antislavery Resistance</i>	Weik 2012
<i>The Archaeology of Citizenship</i>	Camp 2013
<i>The Archaeology of American Cities</i>	Rothschild and Wall 2014
<i>The Archaeology of American Cemeteries and Gravemarkers</i>	Baugher and Veit 2014
<i>The Archaeology of Smoking and Tobacco</i>	Fox 2015
<i>The Archaeology of Gender in Historic America</i>	Rotman 2015
<i>The Archaeology of the North American Fur Trade</i>	Nassaney 2015
<i>The Archaeology of the Cold War</i>	Hanson 2016
<i>The Archaeology of American Mining</i>	White 2017
<i>The Archaeology of Utopian and Intentional Communities</i>	Kozakavich 2017
<i>The Archaeology of American Childhood and Adolescence</i>	Baxter 2019
<i>The Archaeology of Northern Slavery and Freedom</i>	Delle 2019
<i>The Archaeology of Prostitution and Clandestine Pursuits</i>	Yamin and Seifert 2019
<i>The Archaeology of Southeastern Native American Landscapes of the Colonial Era</i>	Cobb 2019
<i>The Archaeology of the Logging Industry</i>	Franzen 2020
<i>The Archaeology of Craft and Industry</i>	Fennell 2021

led to the formation of fragile, shifting, contested, and unstable local, regional, and national identities. The American Experience in Archaeological Perspective (AEAP) book series, published by the University Press of Florida and coedited by historical archaeologists Michael Nassaney and Krysta Ryzewski, aims to focus a material lens on the various threads woven into the garment of nationhood.

The purpose of this essay is to summarize some of the distinctive elements of the national mosaic that the 26 volumes published in the series have revealed up through 2021 (Table 1). In this overview we consider the contributions of the series to historical archaeology as a discipline and our understandings of what “Americanness” entails. Our aim is to reflect upon the series’ findings and inform new audiences about the series rather than critically evaluate it. Critical analysis would be redundant because: (1)

all of the volumes have already undergone extensive peer review prior to publication; (2) most have received one or more published book reviews; and (3) the authors of each book routinely identify topics for future research and expansion in relation to their book’s theme. Some authors also suggest topics that deserve further treatment, but remain underexamined due to limits on space, scope, and/or their expertise.

The goal of the series is to demonstrate how historical archaeology can illuminate the people, places, and events that were formative elements in the American experience. By “American experience,” we mean to include all of the peoples who contributed to the history of the United States of America as an evolving political entity and geographic locale, from the 16th century to the present. The primary geographic focus in the AEAP volumes is on the area within the present-day United States. This focus is not designed

to presume or promote American exceptionalism. Instead, the scope creates an opportunity for authors to engage in concerted investigations of the dominant as well as the marginalized, contested, and under-recognized aspects of American history; the latter are well represented in the materiality of the archaeological record, but less visible in historical narratives. Rather than trumpet patriotic accounts of U.S. history, AEAP authors use archaeological findings as the basis for critical evaluations of the sociopolitical structures, historical processes, exclusionary policies, seminal events, and mundane activities that have shaped present-day American society.

While there is considerable debate over the extent to which America is unified (and what “America” even entails), we contend that activities in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries had a formative influence on the history and culture of the continent and laid the groundwork for new national and cultural identities that differentiated the people in this place from their neighbors, predecessors, and Old World antecedents. Events from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the Rio Grande to the 49th parallel and in adjacent regions (and territories) created a distinctive—albeit sometimes elusive—American identity that has become codified along legal, political, and social lines with clear material signatures. Much of this identity formation and nation building took place within the context of an occupied landscape, whose residents differentially embraced and resisted the emergent social rules that dominant groups sought to establish in the American colonies and the republic that followed.

In this essay we summarize the contents of the volumes published to date, the significance of this body of work for national awakening, and the directions in which we would like to see the series move. We begin by discussing the scope of the series and the motivations for its genesis.

The Scope of the Series

In 2004 the University Press of Florida and Michael S. Nassaney founded the American Experience in Archaeological Perspective book series. Sixteen years later, in 2020, Krysta Ryzewski joined Nassaney as the series coeditor. The 26 AEAP volumes published through 2021 are a repertoire of archaeological approaches to examining the development of the

modern world from an Americanist perspective and through its material legacy.¹ The series operates on the premise that historical archaeology can provide more comprehensive and representative understandings of American lifeways when viewed through a thematic prism, much as its early practitioners envisioned (see Cleland [1988], Deagan [1988], and Orser [1996]). The volumes contribute to anthropological archaeology by employing a holistic and comparative perspective on material, longitudinal, and multi-sited analyses.

Since the publication of the first volume, *The Archaeology of Collective Action* (Saitta 2007), this now well-established series has focused attention on a range of significant themes. Each volume explores an event, process, setting, or institution that played a formative role in the making of the United States of America as a political, social, and cultural entity. These comprehensive overviews underscore the theoretical, methodological, and substantive contributions that archaeology has made to the study of American history and culture. While these studies focus on historical archaeology in the United States, they are also applicable and provide broadly comparative data to historical and anthropological inquiries in other parts of the world. In addition to the published titles (Table 1), some 15 volumes are now in press or under contract and anticipated over the next several years.

The AEAP volumes are meant to be comprehensive thematic overviews that provide readers with a clear understanding of contemporary and past inquires on broad themes in the American experience, much as one would expect from an expanded literature review. The target audience for the series volumes varies according to the authors’ design, from undergraduate students to professionals, though all volumes are meant to be authoritative introductions to a topic and its associated literature for readers at all levels. Many of the volumes exhibit structural similarities, although authors are given significant latitude in approaching and presenting their subjects. Each contributing author provides a broad context for the topic at hand and defines the spatial, temporal, and geographic scope of the study. An historical background and an overview of previous approaches to

¹ We use this terminology as a shorthand for the “United States of America” in defining the geographic scope of this series; no other country in the Western Hemisphere lays claim to “America” in its name.

the topic are essential elements. Typically, the authors present detailed discussions of one or more case studies that illustrate best practices and underscore explicit linkages among materiality, the theme under consideration, and the America arena.

The original proposal for the series included a number of potential titles and authors, most of which are now part of the series list. Subsequent themes have been selected in consultation between the press and the coeditors based on past and current research trends in the field.

Archaeological Contributions to the American Experience

The American experience took root in the 16th century in the temperate latitudes of North America, where colonists, settlers, Indigenous Americans, and others extracted raw materials, produced goods, and exchanged finished products to sustain a way of life. When newcomers arrived in North America the cultural landscape they encountered was the outcome of Native Americans' active engagement with the natural world over millennia, including terraforming through earthwork construction; intentional burning of undergrowth to create and maintain productive habitats; and site abandonment and emplacement associated with population movement (Cobb 2019). This was the stage for the logging, mining, fur trading, farming, and craft production, among other critical activities, that left indelible and distinctive material signatures on the American landscape.

While it would be impossible to summarize all of the poignant observations that over two dozen AEAP series authors have made regarding the American experience, there are some similarities in the ways in which authors have addressed their topics. The contributors to the series review a wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches to relevant material remains. Although the authors vary in their preferred orientation, they all posit that materiality can complement, contradict, and interrogate data obtained from written sources and oral-history accounts—a hallmark of historical archaeology. They also discuss ways that previous researchers have grappled with a particular topic. The aim is to expose the reader to a range of approaches to a topic and how theory informs interpretive insights. For example, in

The Archaeology of the North American Fur Trade, Nassaney (2015) privileged an ethnohistoric approach to emphasize Native American agency in the analysis of the fur trade, even as he also discussed acculturation and world-systems theory as alternate frameworks for archaeological inquiry.

AEAP volumes present analyses of different scales of archaeological data, from small finds and household assemblages to large-scale settlement patterns, as in the historical archaeological scholarship of urban life discussed in *The Archaeology of American Cities* (Rothschild and Wall 2014). Authors often juxtapose different data sets, including materials ranging from faunal remains and personal adornment to architectural debris, in order to elucidate activities associated with colonialism, capitalism, industrialization, and other salient processes (Shackel 2009; Loren 2010; Nassaney 2015; Franzen 2020). A distinguishing feature of each volume is the explicit connections authors make between archaeological evidence and specific aspects of the American experience, such as the Colorado Coalfield Strike and utopian movements (Saitta 2007; Kozakavich 2017) (see also Orser [2007] and Smith [2008]). For the sake of connecting the books to the series and with one another, each volume title is concise and begins with “The Archaeology of.” The focused scope of each volume allows authors to make strong linkages between past and present-day issues within the United States and to identify the roots of many taken-for-granted practices and beliefs in contemporary American society.

As with many studies in historical archaeology, AEAP authors subscribe to the idea that documentary sources only offer partial understandings of a phenomenon under investigation. Since many of the activities explored in the volumes were conducted by underrepresented groups, written records failed to record those acts that were ignored and/or intentionally hidden from view for various reasons, thereby compelling archaeological investigation. In *The Archaeology of Prostitution and Clandestine Activities*, Yamin and Seifert (2019:36) document the material evidence for “keeping clean, avoiding pregnancy, and treating venereal disease,” disclosing “just how difficult and dangerous sex work was.” In other examples, such as *The Archaeology of Institutional Confinement* (Casella 2007), actual behaviors deviated from those that were

prescribed and goods were used in ways in which they were not intended, thus making them particularly amenable to archaeological scrutiny. Casella (2007:132) reported how Native Americans at the Phoenix Indian School maintained a sense of their identity by curating objects, such as talismans, and practicing skills related to their previous reservation lives, such as modifying ceramics using flaking techniques.

The events, institutions, places, practices, and processes associated with the American experience can be grouped thematically to summarize some of what the series has taught us. Many of the themes that integrate and crosscut the archaeology of the American experience include the so-called haunts that shaped the modern world (Orser 1996:57–85), such as capitalism (Matthews 2010) and colonialism (Loren 2010). Other focal topics include social identities of race (Orser 2007), gender (Rotman 2015), and childhood (Baxter 2019); cemeteries (Baugher and Veit 2014) and landscapes (Cobb 2019); and the daily practices of drinking, smoking, and personal adornment (Smith 2008; Loren 2010; Fox 2015). While we cannot discuss all the archaeological findings in the series to date, we turn now to highlight some of the contributions that the series has made to the understanding of the American experience.

Native Americans, Population Movement, and Networks of Exchange

Native Americans' familiarity with the North American landscape, knowledge of its fauna, and mechanisms of movement were essential to the colonial-period fur trade, which required mobile populations to transport goods over vast distances for transatlantic exchange (Nassaney 2015). Before and after the onset of European settlement, Native Americans migrated and coalesced throughout the continent for a variety of economic, social, and political reasons, as evidenced archaeologically by the broad distribution and heterogeneity of artifact styles; a system of transportation networks; and the periodic abandonment and reoccupation of central places on the landscape (Cobb 2019). In various regions, French, British, Russian, and American fur traders obtained directly from Native Americans a range of wild animal pelts and hides that could be processed into hats, breeches,

gloves, bindings, robes, and other goods, until they went out of style and were eventually superseded by cloth, artificial fabrics, and furs from farm-raised animals. More durable and archaeologically visible than the hides themselves were the European manufactured goods desired by Native American consumers. Archaeological studies of the objects made, used, reimagined, and discarded in the course of the fur trade illuminate how exchange was conducted, resisted, and transformed (Nassaney 2015). For example, archaeology demonstrates that imported goods, such as thimbles and brass kettles, served as raw material for artifacts that fulfilled distinctively Native sensibilities. These patterns and the consumer choices that produced them indicate that Native groups should be accorded greater agency and recognized as significant partners in a complex web of relationships that are central to the American experience. Europeans were equally creative, as they adopted new artifact styles like canoes, moccasins, various food stuffs, and stone smoking pipes from among the daily cultural repertoire of their Native allies.

Extractive Industries, Manufacturing, and Labor

Fur traders often preceded the capital investment required for extracting minerals and other natural resources from the land. The time-transgressive nature of logging—expanding from the Northeast and the Great Lakes to the South and West—was congruent with the ideology of Manifest Destiny that propelled European American pioneers from sea to shining sea in the 18th and 19th centuries (Nassaney 2020:x). As Franzen notes in *The Archaeology of the Logging Industry*, “[l]ogging represented the first large-scale alteration of the landscape by European immigrants” beginning in New England in the 17th century (Franzen 2020:1). Deforestation at a previously unseen scale occurred in advance of farming and to provide lumber, fuel, and other commodities. Archaeological findings from logging industry sites in northern Michigan, like the Mason’s Purchase (20DE649) and Trespass Camboose (20DE648) sites, encapsulate many of the conditions and forces that were formative in the American experience, such as the abundance of natural resources, technological innovation, rapid industrialization, immigration, and the accumulation and unequal distribution of wealth that created and reinforced social inequalities

(Nassaney 2020:xi). The archaeology of American logging also brings into focus how increasingly intensive resource extraction and processing contributed to environmental degradation and the literal ruins of capitalism. Because the labor arrangements involved in cutting trees required mobility, sites of various function and size were established and abandoned, leaving behind the detritus of the social and economic practices associated with corporate enterprises and their employees (Franzen 2020).

American mining, perhaps similar to logging, is rife with contradictions. In *The Archaeology of American Mining*, White (2017) examines three historical periods of mining activity in America: colonial-period efforts (1600s), the gold rush in the 19th century, and the mechanized industry, which began in the 1950s. As a whole, White's archaeological evidence demonstrates how and why "[t]he industry is celebrated for economic contributions and vilified for environmental consequences that include pits and waste piles" of gargantuan proportions alongside contaminated watersheds (White 2017:1). Mining is marked by increasing economies of scale leading to environmental deterioration (e.g., deforestation for lumber to support shafts), occupational hazards (e.g., black lung among coal miners), air and water pollution, the growth of multinational corporations in search of offshore resources, and the formation of labor unions seeking to redress low wages, long hours, and unsafe working conditions (Nassaney 2017:xiii). The struggle between managerial ideals and worker autonomy—a consistent theme in many of the studies that feature labor—is manifested materially in the structure of settlements, access to consumer goods, dietary practices, health care, technological innovation, and the ethnic-, gender-, and class-based associations that formed in and outside the workplace (Nassaney 2017:xiii) (see Shackel [2009], Matthews [2010], Rotman [2015], and Fennell [2021]). Archaeological evidence highlights the discrepancies between the standardized practices implemented to reduce labor costs with the creative strategies, ingenuity, pragmatism, and improvisation miners used to keep equipment in working order to get the job done. Abandoned mining equipment, like drills and hand saws, shows that mechanization occurred at a varied pace and small-scale operations persisted long after large-scale production was dominant (White 2017:123–124). Archaeological

approaches to extractive industries and their laborers reveal the dichotomy between the real and the prescribed by exposing the ways in which the material world experienced by workers differed from the idealized spaces designed by elite managers and investors.

The Archaeology of Craft and Industry (Fennell 2021) provides an archaeological complement to the historical literature detailing how extracted and imported raw materials were required for various craft and industrial processes in America. Archaeological studies of craft and industrial production were initiated in the 1960s with the examination of production processes involved in the making and harvesting of commodities; the networks for the movement of goods; the extraction of ores and lumber; and the melting, molding, and firing of iron, silica, and clay in forges and kilns. From these production processes emerged a panoply of agents, raw materials, technologies, and innovations that made possible the products that Americans depended upon and overseas consumers desired.

American entrepreneurs were known to borrow and emulate industrial designs from beyond their shores, as they developed distinctive practices that were adapted to local topography, natural resources, and the available labor pool (Nassaney 2021). By the 19th century American industrial processes had gained international recognition among their competitors, earning them the moniker "the American system of manufacture." Industrial innovation in the production of various goods (e.g., arms, cutlery, sewing machines, bicycles) involved mechanization to cut out irregular shapes in metal and produce interchangeable parts—a defining characteristic of the American system. These developments led to major changes in labor recruitment, labor organization, and the design of living and working spaces associated with the factory system, which was intended to ensure discipline and facilitate the direction and coordination of labor. At the core of these new production practices was the replacement of traditional craft production with a hierarchical order intended to achieve efficiency in production. *The Archaeology of American Capitalism* considers how these reorganizations served to create and reproduce class divisions in American society, encouraging further improvisation (Matthews 2010).

In the absence of guilds to constrain innovation, Americans were more than willing to adopt foreign technology in 19th-century manufacturing processes.

Factory owners were also incentivized to employ machines that segmented the labor process, as evidenced by abandoned equipment and factories that housed it throughout the country. This arrangement could accommodate a largely unskilled labor pool consisting of waves of migrant and enslaved workers at places like the Lattimer Mines in Pennsylvania, the Russell Cutlery in Massachusetts, and the Edgefield potteries in South Carolina, among other production sites (Fennell 2021:32–36,97,131–157). Managers often segregated workers according to discriminatory and racialized wage scales to sow division and thwart collective action (Saitta 2007). Workers were encouraged to be moral and prudent in their actions, prohibited from consuming alcohol, and subjected to other restrictions to ensure submissiveness and productivity. Those in power constructed landscapes of control through architectural style, site location, and spatial organization to reproduce the class structure of American society. Between the elite minority and an overwhelming mass of working poor, a middle class of managers and skilled operatives arose, as expressed in housing forms and culinary practices. Yet, even as managers sought to control workers, a class consciousness developed in an effort to assert autonomy on the shop floor and in company housing.

Historical archaeologists have viewed the workplace as a microcosm of the American experience (Saitta 2007; Shackel 2009; Matthews 2010; Fennell 2021). Its archaeological signatures in the form of hand tools, machines, assembly lines, factory floors, mine shafts, sheds and superstructures, canal and rail arteries, company towns, and other scars upon the land inform on social class, racism, gender roles, environmental degradation, anthropogenic climate change, and other deeply entrenched relations and conditions that signify American identity (Fennell 2021).

Citizenship and Belonging

As early as the 18th century, soon-to-be Americans came to define themselves in opposition to their Old World counterparts, where birthright structured the social order and economic mobility was limited. Conceptions of what it meant to be an American were inculcated at different historical moments in various settings through institutional rules and practices aimed to establish appropriate forms of behavior that hardened when immigration increased in the late 19th

and early 20th centuries (Camp 2013). Settings and institutions, including intentional and utopian communities, were designed to ensure that groups conducted their activities according to prescribed rules, even as individuals and collectivities worked to challenge these arbitrary notions (Kozakavich 2017). Indeed, as Camp (2013) discusses in *The Archaeology of Citizenship*, since the founding of the United States, elites have carefully crafted and policed the rights to citizenship through political and cultural means. Camp uses archaeology to evaluate the ways in which American immigrants have been extended and denied citizenship. She documents how “some marginalized groups used consumption [of clothing and ceramics] to express their desire to be treated as fully naturalized American citizens” (Camp 2013:70). Her case study of the Mt. Lowe Resort and Railway, an early 20th-century tourist destination in southern California, illustrates how visitors were exposed to important elements of a national metanarrative regarding the appropriation of wilderness, the destruction of indigeneity, technological prowess, and Manifest Destiny. Tourists absorbed these messages by witnessing toiling Mexican immigrants who had been lured across the border and forced to endure company-sponsored “Americanization” campaigns.

The idea of America as a melting pot appeared in the early 20th century during a time of accelerated immigration. Nativists sought to keep America pure, and immigrants were welcome provided they were white and able to assimilate in strictly prescribed ways. Indeed, people of African descent and other excluded minorities could only contribute to the melting pot as the fuel to heat the molten mixture. Nevertheless, ordinary people shaped ideas about citizenry by using material culture as a medium of social action. In *The Archaeology of Consumer Culture*, Mullins (2011:61,81) discusses how people’s ceramic consumption patterns in 18th-century South Carolina’s backcountry and 19th-century Five Points in New York City expressed lived experiences through the adoption, reinterpretation, and disregard of goods that found their way into the archaeological record. Individuals of African American and Mexican heritage, as members of historically marginalized groups, were nevertheless active agents who recognized that consumption of costly goods would not help them transcend isolation and discrimination. Thus, their religious, political, and racial loyalties often took precedence over national identity.

Those in power have long sought to mold the composition of the American populace to exclude unwelcome segments of society. Since the birth of the nation in the 18th century, newcomers have been accepted so long as they were willing to swear allegiance, fulfill their patriotic duties, and adopt the practices of white Anglo-Protestants, with few exceptions (Nassaney 2013:xi). In their public lives, immigrants often acquiesced in exchange for a chance at economic mobility—the American dream. To do so, they had to dilute and conceal their ethnic affiliations. Some migrants who attained citizenship after adulthood lived a dual life, committed to being American yet maintaining cherished Old World practices, as they redefined what it meant to be an American. Language, foodways, consumer choices, and other vestiges of the old country initially persisted and then disappeared in subsequent generations, as these new Americans assimilated under intense social pressure to the norms of the dominant culture.

Ethnicity, Religion, and Ideology

Historical archaeologists have analyzed how the countervailing tendencies between the pressure to assimilate and the desire to maintain ethnic separateness are expressed even in one's place of final rest. Symbols of ethnic identity in mortuary settings decline in frequency over time as Americans assimilate, relinquish old identities, and embrace new opportunities for social mobility. In *The Archaeology of American Cemeteries and Grave Markers*, Baugher and Veit (2014:184) found that upper- and upper-middle-class families in the German Jewish cemetery of Salem Fields, in Brooklyn, New York, displayed their material success through monuments and sculpture, much as their Christian counterparts did in other nearby cemeteries. At the same time, racialized groups, who were excluded from full participation in American citizenship, were segregated in death as they had been in life, ignored dominant trends in mortuary treatment, and maintained their own distinctive mortuary practices. For example, shells, ceramic vessels, and other personal items were frequently placed directly over African American graves and evoked personal and metaphorical meanings (Baugher and Veit 2014:169). Chinese American cemeteries often included funerary structures, known as “burners,” for the ritual incineration of paper facsimiles of money,

clothing, and other possessions that would pass to the spirit realm for use by the deceased (Baugher and Veit 2014:180–181). In the western United States, Chinese Americans often employed principles of geomancy or feng shui in the placement of their graves, which follow the contours of the landscape as a protection against evil spirits. They also exhumed their own dead and returned them to China, where their descendants honored them during important religious rituals (Baugher and Veit 2014). The United States' plural society is marked by a mosaic of cultures that have created an extremely diverse burial landscape in keeping with the religious freedoms Americans are accorded, in contrast with places where government edicts have limited commemoration to forms that are consistent with state values (Nassaney 2014b:xvii). The material manifestations of death, grief, and hope are fruitful albeit sensitive grounds for gaining a better understanding of the American experience.

Domestic Spaces: From Rural Farmsteads to Bustling Cities

More archaeological attention has been given to sites of the living, where everyday activities often led to the loss, discard, and abandonment of significant quantities of material goods. Farmsteads and cities—perhaps representing two poles of a rural-urban continuum—are well represented in the AEAP series, since activities took place in the city, the country, or somewhere in between (Groover 2008; Rothschild and Wall 2014). Abandoned farmsteads are among the most ubiquitous type of settlement throughout much of the United States, and urban archaeology has come of age over the past several decades, while the archaeology of suburbia lies in the future.

From the early colonial period to World War II, America was predominantly agrarian and rural. In the 18th century well over half the population was engaged in agricultural pursuits and the number of American farms peaked in 1920 at 6.4 million (Groover 2008). Beginning in the mid-19th century, technological innovations, such as mechanization, began replacing human labor resulting in fewer but larger commercial farms, effectively placing family farms at a competitive disadvantage and forcing their occupants into cities (Nassaney 2008:xiv). Studies show that farm households were always enmeshed in intricate commercial systems with links to broader popular culture trends

and consumer choices, thereby challenging the agrarian myth—the idea that farming represented an idyllic and isolated way of life (Stewart-Abernathy 1986).

Furthermore, as Groover (2008) details in *The Archaeology of North American Farmsteads*, archaeological findings demonstrate that farmsteads are as abundant as they are diverse in form and content. Dimensions of material variability that implicate past lifeways include architectural forms (e.g., house size and method of construction); spatial organization (e.g., locations of outbuildings and disposal areas); subsistence remains (e.g., animal-species composition and butchering practices); and objects of consumer culture associated with food preparation, health, and status display (e.g., ceramics, patent-medicine bottles, and personal adornment), among others. Divergent patterns of adoption suggest that the American experience on farms was by no means homogeneous, and much can be learned from examining the articulation between large-scale processes of modernization and their local material expressions.

Cities complement the study of rural life. Their sheer size and density pose logistical challenges for archaeologists, even as they represent rich stratigraphic deposits and demographic heterogeneity associated with large, permanent populations. The city is possibly one of the most important inventions in human history (Rothschild and Wall 2014). It certainly has become an increasingly attractive residential option for over 80% of Americans (though the COVID-19 global pandemic and the ability for some to work at home induced large numbers of people to move away from metropolitan areas). The demographic shift toward cities underscores the relevance of urban archaeology to an increasing population that aims to connect with the past. As dense-built environments and dynamic, fast-changing regional settlements, cities frequently contain deep cultural layers below asphalt and concrete, hidden from view and occasionally undisturbed. Historical archaeologists working in urban settings have employed macro- and microscales of analysis to understand the spatial and social dimensions of urbanization (Nassaney 2014a:x; Rzewski 2020). At the macroscale, focus is on the city as artifact, and linkages can be made between the features that archaeologists encounter (e.g., landfills, wharves, canals, railroads, and water- and waste-disposal systems) and the economic growth of the city and its environmental context. Analysis at the microscale allows for close contextual examination of the intersections of race,

ethnicity, class, and gender, and the ways in which material culture was mobilized to assert and challenge social identities in urban settings. In addition to juxtaposing documentary and material records, careful observation in the ground can also provide evidence of vernacular building traditions that went unrecorded. As illustrated by *The Archaeology of American Cities*, archaeology is also well suited to examine long-term history by peeling away layers and documenting processes of urban expansion and displacement, as cities grew and annexed adjoining areas (Rothschild and Wall 2014).

The structures of American cities are expressions of past and present political struggles. For example, urban growth in the 18th century was influenced by elites who could monopolize preferred locations to reinforce their economic and political power (Nassaney 2014a:xi). Acting in concert with city officials, they also limited access to necessities, such as foodstuffs, by placing markets away from consumers. Rothschild and Wall (2014) demonstrate that the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services in cities led to ethnic enclaves and created a distinctive social geography in which newcomers to cities generally settled among those with similar backgrounds, and neighborhood distinctions often formed in concert with residents' socioeconomic status. Historical archaeologists apply long-term perspectives to understanding how late 19th- and early 20th-century urban planners and city officials implemented a range of strategies—from media propaganda to displacement by eminent domain—to reinforce civic ideals about the use of urban space and who belonged in it.

Control over the histories of cities among present-day populations has received heightened public interest and led to vocal outcries in at least two high-profile cases that have garnered national and international attention. In the well-known African Burial Ground in New York City, the most glaring message was that enslavement once existed in the North—an inconvenient truth that had long been ignored in favor of emphasizing the atrocities of Southern plantation slavery (LaRoche and Blakey 1997; Delle 2019). Slavery also came under scrutiny at the President's House in Philadelphia, when developments there led to the archaeological investigation of quarters used by people enslaved by our founding father, George Washington—just steps away from our most hallowed symbol of freedom, the Liberty Bell. Archaeology

provided the literal space to entertain a dialogue on race participated in by thousands of visitors (Rothschild and Wall 2014:178–184; Delle 2019).

Marginalized groups can have a voice through archaeology, and their voices can be amplified in urban settings where concentrated media channels can be used to galvanize public opinion. Urban sites that relate to historically disenfranchised groups and locations of past conflicts have become important agoras for community engagement and dark-heritage dialogues in archaeology. Archaeology is effective at revealing the process of forgetting that has occurred in the construction of our national history. Much of that history took place in cities, where powerful figures would congregate to legislate, regulate, contemplate, placate, negotiate, and emancipate. These same spaces were occupied and visited by the relatively powerless, frequently against their will, as they sought to forge their own view of what it meant to be an American, often alongside and sometimes in opposition to dominant ideals. The threads of the past deeply buried in cities are woven into the tapestry of the American experience.

Socialization, Institutional Power, and Resistance

Throughout our nation's history, citizens needed to be properly socialized into dominant cultural values (Camp 2013). This typically occurred in the family, workplace, and through civic institutions, like the compulsory education system. Institutions were also designed for those who violated rules and statutes (criminals and deviants) in the form of places for punishment, asylum, and exile (Casella 2007). An enduring challenge for a democratic society is to seek a balance between civil liberties and maintenance of the social order (Nassaney 2007b:xv). Since the founding of the new republic, the need to confine, punish, rehabilitate, reform, and deter abnormal behavior has had a dramatic impact on the definition of American citizenship and the treatment of transgression. Those in power sought to inculcate discipline in prisons, asylums, and detention camps, as well as related settings, such as factories, hospitals, and schools (Shackel 2009; Matthews 2010). In this expanded Foucauldian world, analysis must encompass the powerful as well as those whose lives were constrained by walls, fences, and bars. Even under the most severe conditions, individuals have some degree of agency to enact both a public and hidden transcript, the materiality of which is amenable to fruitful archaeological investigation.

Excavated artifacts in the form of obsolete ceramics, sparse room furnishings, standardized uniforms, and limited medical supplies were used to cultivate a docile consciousness, while graffiti, tribal amulets, flaked ceramic plates, alcohol bottles, and bone dice challenged the structures of power and efforts to assert/limit autonomy (Casella 2007; Nassaney 2007b:xvi).

Resistance to power is a leitmotif in the American experience—the nation was founded on dissent. Even as capitalism dominated economic relationships and provided the means for material accumulation and consumption (Matthews 2010; Mullins 2011), segments of the population renounced this premise, and a large majority was denied the purported benefits of this insidious system. As a result, America has harbored the conditions for intentional communities composed of members united by a common vision of an ideal society and a shared commitment among voluntary residents to provide an alternative to unacceptable mainstream conditions (Kozakavich 2017). While their forms, motivations, inspiration, and core values certainly varied, early efforts of the Shakers, Harmonists, Moravians, and Zoar Separatists, among others, set a precedent for numerous utopian communities. The 19th century was perhaps the heyday of these alternative developments, partially motivated by the impersonal and alienated relationships that obtained and intensified under industrial capitalism.

Intentionality and resistance is apparent in the materiality of countless communal actions, from building foundations to bottle caps, animal bones to smoking pipes (Kozakavich 2017). Contextual relationships among varied objects can provide evidence of where and when community guidelines were practiced, and how individuals and families mobilized the material world—not always in strict compliance with societal rules. Material evidence of practices that deviated from those specifically required by community protocols can reveal the tension between the real and prescribed behaviors for individual members. For instance, ceramics found in areas where Shaker women laundered clothing suggest that work took precedence over communal dining. Similarly, the presence of a key to lock away private property at Kaweah Colony in northern California implies tears in the fabric of community, “where the only neighbors for several miles were supposed to be brothers and sisters in a common cause” (Kozakavich 2017:193).

Members of such intentional societies had often once been economically privileged, whereas the disenfranchised rubbed against the grain of the dominant culture by engaging in more discrete, unconventional, and clandestine acts of everyday resistance that allowed for economic survival and personal autonomy. Rebellion against social mores, piracy, smuggling, and other secretive and irritating acts are irresistibly fascinating and archaeologically detectable. Few activities attract more interest and curiosity than the intimacies revealed in *The Archaeology of Prostitution and Clandestine Pursuits* (Yamin and Seifert 2019). The sale of sexual favors is a type of commercial transaction that still occupies an ambiguous legal and moral place in a society that disparages prostitutes, their clients, and their promiscuous liaisons, while recognizing the persistence of these practices among people of all ethnicities, racialized groups, religions, and classes. Scholars have examined the various socioeconomic settings and circumstances that gave rise to these acts to understand the motivations that compelled individuals to commodify their bodies for economic profit.

The sites of these sexual liaisons contain hidden material transcripts that allow the construction of a much more nuanced picture of what occupational and domestic experiences were like for the women who made their living in commercial sex (Nassaney 2019:xii). Yamin and Seifert (2019) detail how grooming artifacts, such as skin creams, hair-care products, scented face powder, and rouge, were used to enhance beauty and promote a youthful appearance in keeping with the theatrical nature of prostitution, just as perfume and cologne bottles, cream jars, tooth-powder jars, toothbrushes, hairbrushes, combs, soap dishes, pitchers, and washbasins reflect the importance of physical attractiveness in the parlor house. In comparing artifacts recovered from brothels and saloons in the West (Alaska, California, Colorado, and Alberta, Canada), Yamin and Seifert (2019:72–75) reported that brothel collections included about twice as many pharmaceutical items as found in saloons to soothe the pain and sickness that women endured. Brothel assemblages generally have larger proportions of clothing artifacts, testifying to the frequent ritual of undressing and dressing. Ceramics and food remains are indicative of the dining practices that characterized these places. While both men and women consumed food and drink in

this social context, what they ate and imbibed and how it was served differed. Nearly all brothels in their survey displayed evidence of alcohol consumption (to lower inhibitions); however, champagne was preferred by the clientele of the most expensive establishments, along with fancy dishes, choice cuts of meat, and exotic foods (Yamin and Seifert 2019).

In short, archaeology reveals agency in the form of unconventional, courageous, and clandestine behaviors. As Starbuck (2011) discusses in *The Archaeology of Forts and Battlefields*, even in the most structured environments consuming alcohol on the job was a form of workplace resistance to the monotonous rhythm of capitalist production and the boredom of military installations. Similarly, discarded cutlery wasters tossed out the window of the Russell Cutlery in defiance of the boss pointed to worker efforts to regain some degree of autonomy in a dehumanizing setting (Yamin and Seifert 2019:100–101). The recovery of objects intentionally deposited and concealed beneath thresholds and in basements by Americans of different backgrounds demonstrate the efforts to achieve supernatural ends in their domiciles (Yamin and Seifert 2019:130–138). Archaeology reveals how material indications of class were manipulated in brothels, the limitations that were placed on gender roles for women, and the ways in which women countered these conditions.

Enslavement and Freedom

Much as patriarchy seriously constrained women's lives, the institution of slavery—America's original sin—practically abolished human rights for most people of African descent and left a horrific legacy of racism that persists to the present. Archaeologists have examined the myriad ways in which people perpetrated and opposed such an inhumane form of confinement and exploitation that was legally sanctioned as a source of profit (Singleton and Bograd 1995). While antislavery resistance and other covert acts of the subaltern sometimes appear in the records of the dominant society (e.g., broadsides advertising runaways), they are also evident, if ever so subtly, in the physical residues and hidden transcripts that reveal sabotage, escape, rebellion, and daily refusal to cooperate. Archaeology demonstrates that enslavement was not a totalizing system, despite its pervasiveness for centuries throughout the Americas.

As discussed by Weik (2012) in *The Archaeology of Antislavery Resistance*, sacred bundles, pathways marking escape routes, hideaways, settlements in marginalized locations, the blending of artifact uses from diverse cultural traditions, and a range of other physical traces suggest how people stolen from Africa sought to create new identities in conceptual and material spaces that allowed independence from their enslavers (see also Yamin and Seifert [2019:109–117]). Moreover, these conditions were not confined to the American South. In *The Archaeology of Northern Slavery and Freedom*, Delle (2019) employs archaeological evidence to dispel prevailing assumptions about Northern slavery. Documentary and archaeological records indisputably reveal that several thousand Africans and their descendants were buried in the well-known New York African Burial Ground in Lower Manhattan in the 18th century, clearly indicating the scope of slavery in this city (Rothschild and Wall 2014:174–178). The recovery of hundreds of African American burials there in the early 1990s is a poignant example that shattered the long-held myth that large, enslaved populations had only really existed in the South.

Archaeologists conducting research on the settings in which enslaved laborers lived and worked have established how the enslaved used familiar objects and spaces to implement strategies that led to new identities in an effort to position themselves apart from the dominant culture (Mullins 2011:162). Newly freed African Americans sought to evade racism by preferring to purchase national brands in Annapolis, Maryland during Reconstruction because these goods were sealed, could not be adulterated, and ensured a level of quality that bulk goods lacked (Mullins 2011).

Despite the social divisions erected to keep groups apart and thwart their ability to identify shared interests, Americans have often come together to bridge these gaps. In his study of self-liberation, Weik (2012) discussed how people of African descent worked across the color line to challenge the horrific conditions of enslavement. In Cass County, Michigan, archaeological survey identified several sites where African freedom seekers from the American South lived and worked in the mid-19th century (Weik 2012:101–102). Although many contemporary local people knew the role their ancestors, earlier residents, and Quakers had played in the Underground Railroad, the recovery and preservation of the material remains

of these people's lives made this chapter in local and national history more tangible. It also heightened community pride by verifying the participation of local peoples in assisting others seeking freedom. The evidence for self-liberated Africans in the past serves as an inspiration to presently oppressed peoples. It also reminds us of the contradictions that our predecessors faced in daily life on both sides of the color line as they built a nation. The work on the archaeology of slavery and antislavery resistance is central to understanding the foundations of the American experience (Weik 2012; Delle 2019). We archaeologists must not forget that there were always challenges that set limits to prejudice used to justify economic exploitation and discrimination in America. Archaeology can play a role in revealing sites where people struggled, won, and died for their freedom. By commemorating these places, we can come to a new resolve about the future direction of our nation as we seek to rectify past social ills.

Social Identity and Material Culture

Archaeologists have long contended that individuals and collectivities construct and express their social identities—a composite of the socially sanctioned roles that individuals enact as members of a group—through the material world. Identities are never created in isolation: they are the outcomes of interaction (Nassaney 2010:xi). Thus, Americans since colonial times took the opportunity to create their social identities by literally embodying themselves with beads, bracelets, buckles, buttons, and other sartorial fashions to convey information about their status, occupation, ethnicity, religion, and sexual preference (Loren 2010).

Material expressions of identity take the most prosaic of forms, such as dietary practices, alcohol consumption (Smith 2008), tobacco use (Fox 2015), and bodily adornment (Loren 2010). The authors of *The Archaeology of Alcohol and Drinking* (Smith 2008) and *The Archaeology of Smoking and Tobacco* (Fox 2015) detail how leisurely consumption practices among working classes differ in setting and purpose, in some cases, from those among elites in private. Similarly, archaeological analysis demonstrates how cigars and long-stemmed, white clay pipes were reserved for the leisure class, whereas workers used short-stemmed pipes that could be clenched between their teeth to free up their hands at the Boot Mill in

Lowell, Massachusetts (Fox 2015:84–86). Some of these practices also reinforced notions of masculinity, as women were generally prohibited from smoking and drinking in public in the 18th through early 20th centuries.

Under conditions of colonial entanglement, identities were conceived as fluid and malleable, actively negotiated, and open to manipulation. Sumptuary laws in 17th- and 18th-century America constrained fashion choices in an effort to maintain social boundaries of class, race, and ethnicity (Loren 2010). Yet people crafted fashions according to practicality, social context, and daily experience, as Loren (2010) demonstrates in *The Archaeology of Clothing and Bodily Adornment in Colonial America*. In colonial settings, where colonists and Native people lived in close proximity to one another, individuals developed a new array of annoying clothing options that were at odds with the legal restrictions the colonists faced and were expected to follow. Objects, such as glass beads, crucifixes, and coins, were often repurposed in the hands of Native Americans and displayed in ways unintended by their original makers. Creative sartorial styles observed archaeologically appear in the form of perforated coins and the blending of personal adornment from various cultural traditions (Loren 2010:55–72).

As archaeology has shown repeatedly, practice confronted principles, particularly among those segments of the population who lived along the margins of historical narratives. By viewing clothing at the intersection of multiple lines of evidence—archaeological, documentary, ethnographic, and pictorial—archaeologists see beyond the essential identity ascribed to an object at the time of its production based upon its intended function and grasp the symbolic meanings and values that artifacts acquire through use. Repurposing and reimagining material culture to demarcate social identity is a hallmark of the American experience.

Conflict and Memory

Ingenuity and creativity also characterize daily life in the American workplace and in times of conflict, when agents are driven by boredom, scarcity, competition, fear, and unfamiliarity brought on by a lack of knowledge. Material remains also help us to distinguish between expected behaviors and actual

activities performed on the ground. In *The Archaeology of Forts and Battlefields*, Starbuck (2011) provides a reminder that archaeological investigations at the Battle of the Little Bighorn have led to a complete retelling of “Custer’s Last Stand,” forcing a reconsideration of the long-held assumptions about the man, his mission, and his Native American adversaries’ military tactics. Following World War II, the U.S. government engaged in a permanent war economy, known as the “Cold War” (1945–1989), in an effort to compete with the former Soviet Union and arm itself against an attack that never came (Hanson 2016). This defensive posture had long-lasting political, social, and material implications. In *The Archaeology of the Cold War*, Hanson (2016) discusses how research, development, production, and testing of nuclear armaments, driven by patriotism, fear, and paranoia, had profound material effects on the American landscape in the form of a brutalist aesthetic of concrete facilities, structures, domestic housing, hidden bunkers, observation decks, towers, and associated artifacts. Archaeological investigations of building foundations at the Camp Desert Rock, Nevada, test site revealed spatial divisions and the addition of a locker area that had not been described in archival records or oral accounts (Hanson 2016:90–91). The evidence suggests an increasing number of visitors to the site requiring additional facilities and a degree of privacy unavailable in other military spaces. Hanson’s research also revealed that declining numbers of Cold War veterans have discretely and insightfully reported the need for improvisation to achieve their goals—they did not always follow the book.

This proliferation spawned a counter movement in the form of peace camps constructed and occupied by individuals contesting the Cold War and its material effect on local and global environments (Hanson 2016). As a symbol of 20th-century American civil disobedience and creative resistance to the power of the military-industrial complex, a peace camp at the Nevada test site contains graffiti, rock art, campsites, and detention structures. Peace offerings speak directly to the ways in which protesters expressed their sentiments about nuclear war and their desire for a nuclear free world. Archaeology can reveal these hidden, forgotten, and marginalized manifestations of daily life that underscore a long tradition of resistance to efforts to establish American hegemony at home and abroad.

Class, Gender, and Childhood under Capitalism

Crosscutting all these dimensions of the American experience are the salient identities of class, race, ethnicity, gender, and age that were expressed through material symbols and are amenable to archaeological study.² While too numerous to detail, these and other social categories are operative in many of the studies in the series, thereby highlighting their centrality in American life as demonstrated by the following examples.

The backdrop for the American experience since the Industrial Revolution has been capitalism and the struggle between workers (labor) and managers (capital) (Matthews 2010). Industrialization, harsh working conditions, low wages, and the deskilling of labor galvanized a working-class consciousness that often led to collective action to challenge the political and economic forces that attempted to create and maintain structural inequalities. Concessions, such as the right to collective bargaining, safer working conditions, and the 40 h. work week, were eventually gained from these struggles. History shows that these rights were neither inevitable nor won without a fight (Nassaney 2007a:xiv). Nowhere is this more apparent than in the coalfields of southern Colorado.

Armed conflict and class warfare have been examined through the archaeology of the Colorado Coalfield Strike of 1913–1914, where Saitta (2007) and the Ludlow Collective employed an explanatory and emancipatory archaeology to craft an exposé of an important, violent, and partially forgotten chapter in American history. A deadly confrontation erupted that was precipitated by a coal-miners' strike that began in 1913. By focusing on the remains of a tent colony that was fired upon by the state militia in 1914, Saitta and coworkers recovered evidence of the everyday lives and relationships of an ethnically diverse group of miners and their families, and the ways they enacted collective strategies of resistance to further their cause against capital. For example, the miners relied on national brands perhaps in an effort to conceal locally acquired produce that could be traced to particular merchants in sympathy with their cause (Saitta 2007:76). Their use of plain ceramics in

daily practice while reserving decorated vessels for special occasions may have been a conscious effort to build class solidarity (Saitta 2007:82). The miners were able to transcend ethnic divisions in their efforts to unite in the face of low wages and poor working conditions.

Class and racial oppressions are the offspring of patriarchy. The study of gender relations and the roles that women played in the American experience reveal the complexity and significance of female activities at varying scales of analysis. Moreover, gender as a social construct is constantly being restructured to serve the needs of capital, even as women create their own discourse, spaces, and means of empowering themselves in both private and public spheres. In *The Archaeology of Gender in Historic America*, Rotman (2015) explored gender variation to understand both normative and non-normative gendered experiences in America. She posits that several gender ideologies—corporate families, republican motherhood, the cult of domesticity, domestic reform, and equal-rights feminism—represent the dominant cultural discourses of their respective times and locations, defined largely by white, middle-class Protestants in heteronormative sexual relations.

Numerous lessons emerge from a close examination of the materiality of gender in historical America (Rotman 2015). First, gender ideologies were inculcated in the home, community, and institutions, such as schools, military installations, and factories. Second, one must understand the demographic composition of a community to contextualize the archaeological deposits under study. Third, women generally had relatively high status vis-à-vis men when their contributions to the economy were acknowledged. Fourth, socialization to gender roles occurs formally and informally through taken-for-granted objects and in places that people navigate on a daily basis. And, finally, there is considerable variation in the extent to which agents subscribed to dominant gender roles at any historical moment.

Rotman (2015) discusses the domestic reformers who rejected the cult of domesticity—a dominant gender ideal of the 19th century that emphasized piety, purity, domesticity, and submissiveness, marked by the ideological and physical separation of public and private spheres. Some reformers sought to expand women's roles from domestic spaces to the public arena by professionalizing housework

² Place of origin, nationality, political and religious affiliation, ableism, and sexual orientation are among other positionalities that influenced material life.

occupations both in the home and beyond. Individuals rarely adopted ideologies wholesale, as they negotiated the cultural milieu in which they were enmeshed. Indeed, the negotiation of difference between the expected behaviors associated with personal discipline and the lived experiences on the American landscape creates patterns that befuddle simple characterizations of gendered roles. It is this intersectional richness that archaeologists are poised to explore and interrogate through their analyses of the materiality of gender in historical America.

Women's roles as nurturers and their dependent progeny are also of archaeological interest (Baxter 2019). Researchers acknowledge that childhood was formative for all adults, and children were contributors to the archaeological record and the behaviors of adults responsible for their upbringing. Children have been (and continue to be) important cultural agents. In *The Archaeology of American Childhood and Adolescence*, Baxter (2019) notes that the ways in which American childhood is constructed, idealized, transformed, and "lost" left an indelible mark on the American landscape and psyche. Moreover, material culture played a significant role in all of these practices, underscoring the potency and potential of archaeology to illuminate American childhood and adolescence.

Baxter (2019) discusses important changes in the ways in which childhood has been defined over the past few centuries with the emergence of adolescence in the early 20th century. She documents a mosaic of action that delineates the efforts of adults to construct literal and conceptual spaces for children and how children enacted their own strategies to assert themselves and their material desires. The "pestering power of children" is but one example that illustrates how children at a very young age can insert themselves into the wider arena of the marketplace, even when they lack disposable income.

Children and related themes are also worth examining in the contemporary world; childhood today must be appreciated in its own right, and understandings derived from it cannot be extended into the past. Baxter (2019) suggests several trends in the 21st century: children have replaced fathers as the central focus of families; parents are extremely indulgent with their children; and adolescence often extends well beyond one's 25th birthday. Parents allow children greater independence, and yet are

increasingly concerned with their safety. Finally, children have become one of the most significant consumer forces in America, responsible for literally billions of dollars in sales, much of it in electronic and digital forms. While some lament that the dematerializing of children's worlds into the digital domain will doom the archaeology of childhood and adolescence to the dustbins of history, suffice it to say that children's impact on contemporary society is unlikely to wane. Whatever the future may hold for unborn generations, rest assured that archaeological insight will be welcome, as present and future archaeologists continue to decipher the role of childhood and adolescence in the American experience.

Looking Forward

As a corpus of scholarship, the books published thus far in the AEAP series reflect the prominence and development of certain themes and research foci within the field of historical archaeology since the early 2000s. Each volume aims to capture the state of knowledge in the discipline related to a particular topic at the time of its publication. The next 15 books currently in preparation for the series will continue to highlight topics of interest to contemporary scholars. Forthcoming volumes foreground the American experience as revealed through the archaeologies of plantation life, religion, health and medicine, foodways, and shipwrecks. They also reflect the changing scope of historical archaeology as a discipline concerned both with the contemporary and recent past, and as a field whose findings may be applied to address persistent issues of inequity, social justice, and environmental degradation, among others, in American society. Other forthcoming volumes on the archaeologies of the contemporary past, violence, protests, and homelessness in the United States underscore the relevance of historical archaeology for navigating contemporary American society and for charting the course for a more equitable, accountable future.

Recently the editors have also chosen a new direction for the series with the addition of books that are focused on particular geographic areas. These volumes range in their spatial scope from individual states, including California, Florida, Louisiana, and Massachusetts, to regions, such as the Pacific

Northwest and the Great Lakes. These geographically focused books in the series will continue to foreground the relationship between a region's archaeological record and the American experience. The purpose of these place-based volumes is to provide readers with an immersive and comprehensive overview of historical archaeological scholarship within a specific region at a level of resolution that would not necessarily be possible in a thematic volume, whose coverage typically integrates case studies from across the United States.

There remain numerous topics and geographic areas to cover in future series volumes. We, the series coeditors, are actively recruiting authors whose works will shape the trajectory of historical archaeology in this decade and beyond. We aim to grow the series in ways that continue to assert and maintain the relevance of historical archaeology to issues at the forefront of present-day societal and scholarly concerns. We are especially mindful of and inspired by the host of recent social movements and emergent scholarship that is destined to redefine the scope and practice of historical archaeology for the next generation of practitioners—including, but not limited to, Black Lives Matter and #MeToo, environmental justice, Indigenous knowledge, antiracism, violence and privilege, reparation, diasporic communities, migration, accessibility and ableism, LGBTQ+ representation, dark heritage, disaster studies, and decolonization (R. Gould 2007; Hanson 2016:136–139; Weik 2019; D. Gould et al. 2020; Franklin et al. 2020; Matthews and Phillippi 2020; Rose and Kennedy 2020; Supernant et al. 2020; Flewellen et al. 2021; Heath-Stout 2023).

The process of publishing in the AEAP series begins with correspondence between the series editors and prospective authors. We actively recruit contributors, but prospective authors are also welcomed to contact us with inquiries about potential topics and the process for submitting volume proposals. Historical archaeologists at all stages of their career are invited to propose topics for the series. We strive to recruit authors who represent the diversity of people and institutions within our profession (e.g., academia, cultural-resource management, government sectors, museums). Although the series does not publish edited volumes, we welcome coauthored monographs, especially those that pair junior and senior scholars and academics with those working in other realms.

Prospective authors should begin by contacting us about the series. We will then arrange a meeting to discuss the possible scope and organization of the proposed volume.³ We next work with authors to prepare a formal proposal for the volume following a template. Once we approve the prospectus, it is reviewed in house by the University Press of Florida acquisitions editor, Mary Puckett. After approval by the press, which usually takes about four to six weeks, authors receive and sign an advance contract, which commits them to a due date for submitting a complete manuscript. In the prospectus, authors have the freedom to choose a manuscript due date that accommodates their schedules. Most authors propose a submission deadline that falls one or two years after the contract date. Once submitted, the manuscript draft is evaluated by three external reviewers and the two series editors over the course of two to three months. After the author addresses their feedback and the editorial board approves the project, the author delivers the final manuscript to the press, the volume enters the production stage, and the finished product typically appears in print within a year. The University Press of Florida works closely with authors to coordinate marketing, promotion, and events associated with the launch of their book.

Concluding Thoughts

The AEAP book series has provided an opportunity to scrutinize from a material perspective many of the events, institutions, settings, and processes that have been foundational to the American experience over the past five centuries. The series volumes offer complementary lenses through which the American experience can be viewed, with each volume providing an albeit partial glimpse of a complex, multifaceted phenomenon. When viewed in its totality, the series is greater than the sum of its parts. It would be too reductive to attempt to summarize in this conclusion the lessons that have emerged from some 26 volumes in the series. Nevertheless, we can

³ For more information about the AEAP book series, go to <<https://upf.com/seriesresult.asp?ser=The%20American%20Experience%20in%20Archaeological%20Perspective&indexnum=10>>.

state with certainty that the archaeological record is a palimpsest encoding cooperation and conflict, domination and resistance, individualism and collective action, survival and failure, as groups and individuals attempted to simultaneously reproduce their societies and identities, even as they reinvented themselves as Americans. Armed with materials and ideas forged in distant lands, immigrants to the United States encountered landscapes, people, ecological conditions, and opportunities heretofore unimagined. Indigenous Americans were forced to adapt to these foreign invaders and often worked to accommodate unfamiliar goods, novel activities, and foreign beliefs into their practices and beliefs. An ideology of unbridled optimism for some and unfathomable oppression for others fueled a dynamic process that propelled the nation forward.

The profits to be gained from America's riches were exploited successively through mercantile, agrarian, and, finally, industrial capitalism, leading to the creation of inordinate wealth and marked disparities among social classes. Many were forced to relinquish their land and became disenfranchised, while others had to sell their labor in the hopes of attaining the American dream—the promise that social advancement can be achieved through hard work. Of course, not everyone subscribed to this vision, and it remained illusory for almost all but white, literate, elite, land-owning, heterosexual men. Members of the dominant culture crafted codes and created circumstances that would ensure unequal privilege, as they rationalized (and naturalized) the plight of women, people of color, the Indigenous, and the working class. While the archaeology of civil rights and social justice has yet to be fully realized, material evidence of reform movements and forms of resistance among the people without history litter the sites archaeologists regularly investigate. These are the literal grounds where power and influence were enacted and contested, and can serve as platforms for righting historical wrongs.

Collectively, Americans simultaneously benefit from and carry the burden of the Mayflower Compact, the Pueblo Revolt, the Revolutionary War, and the Seneca Falls Convention, to name just a few iconic, landmark events in American collective history. As Americans, our heritage is marked by an Anglo-Saxon cultural tradition that dominates our

legal system, an economic liberalism that buttresses capitalist accumulation, the separation of church and state, a free-market system with little labor protection, the despicable treatment of Native Americans, white supremacy, high rates of gun ownership and inordinate murder rates, widespread poverty, a large incarcerated population, and inequitable health care. In short, our Eurocentric, racialized, colonial, patriarchal, and capitalist legacy (Orser 1996) has imprinted our national character with indelible marks warranting archaeological study. These global processes are expressed locally wherever we turn our material gaze, thereby making it incumbent on scholars to examine the American experience from an archaeological perspective. Careful analysis of this material record demonstrates similarities and differences in the human lived experience of the post-Columbian world over broad spatial scales, leading us to appreciate the uniqueness and banality of the American experiment and the challenges we face in its interpretation.

Insofar as archaeology can challenge contemporary myths that serve the dominant culture, the discipline and its findings will become relevant to communities that aim to expose injustices and rewrite history (Nassaney 2014a:xii; Ryzewski 2022). If nothing else, the contributions to the AEAP series bring into focus the deeds—rightly and wrongly—that constitute our national heritage. It is up to us as Americans to decode and draw poignant lessons from this history if we are to truly form a more perfect union and awaken to the genuine possibilities that lie ahead.

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