

REVIEWS

Avalon Chronicles: The English in America 1497-1696, Volume 8. Edited by James A. Tuck and Barry Gaulton. Ferryland, NL: The Colony of Avalon Foundation [with Memorial University of Newfoundland], 2003, ISSN 1205-853X.

THE ENGLISH IN AMERICA 1497-1696 is a thematic volume of *Avalon Chronicles*, a journal published by the Colony of Avalon Foundation in Ferryland, and edited by James A. Tuck and Barry Gaulton. This number brings together essays by prominent archaeologists who have researched sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English settlements along the eastern North American coast. The geographic scope of essays ranges from the Arctic to Maryland and Virginia. Studies include the Newfoundland settlements at Ferryland and Cupids, as well as prominent colonies in the United States: the Pilgrim sites in Massachusetts, Jamestown in Virginia, and St. Mary's City in Maryland.

The articles in this collection give the reader an introduction to recent archaeological work at these important sites, and the various theories and approaches used in research. After the editors' introduction, Peter Pope gives an overview of the English presence in Newfoundland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, partly evidenced by the ceramics typical in these centuries. The remaining nine essays deal with specific sites, providing findings from recent excavations at each.

All articles are rich in detail about the kinds of artifacts discovered at each site. William Gilbert's essay on John Guy's colony in Cupids, for example, provides a wealth of data on the ceramics, metal, glass, and other artifacts discovered there since 1995. These artifacts are also used to shed light on the several instances in the seventeenth century where the site was destroyed by fire. In many colonial settlements, artifacts are the only historical evidence that remains; for Cupids, few documents dating after 1624 have been located. However, through the use of the archaeological record, Gilbert suggests that the colony continued at least until the end of the seventeenth century.

While most essays deal with what objects reveal about the original settlements, several writers focus on how the archaeological site itself has been rein-

terpreted over the years. Some are updates about ongoing work at sites, as Robert McGhee's account of a house built in the Arctic in 1578 by members of the Frobenius expedition.

Ivor Noël Hume's essay on Fort Raleigh in North Carolina is the most extensive discussion of the history of an archaeological site, indicating the interpretive problems over the project's history. He provides the cautionary dictum that, as in the case of the Fort Raleigh site, if archaeologists "excavate something we know to be there and we find something that looks like it, we tend to accept it as such" (54). Rarely, he points out, do archaeologists have the funding to challenge earlier conclusions, or the audacity to upset those who have created an historic site. Through a number of fortuitous circumstances, Noël Hume was able to do both at Fort Raleigh, finding convincing evidence that the site was a different — albeit equally important — one from what the National Park Service portrayed it to be.

Since many of these essays deal with the first attempts at establishing a settlement in a new colony, the authors often focus on what Mary Beaudry, Karin Goldstein, and Craig Chartier point to as a dominant theme: accommodation and adaptation in the New World. Deciding on how the landscape should be arranged for the layout of a new village, determining appropriate house-types, filling dwellings with household goods — all of these speak to the mentality of the colonist, for they reveal how much settlers felt it important to replicate their old world homes left behind.

Several articles attempt to comparatively gauge the material life of this New World context, given what was typical back in England. Some managed to be grandiose. For example, combining archaeological evidence with recent documentary materials, Beaudry et al. argue that the mid-seventeenth-century house used by Josiah Winslow, Governor of Plymouth colony, was a type that would be a stylish mansion for any middle gentry back in England. But one only needs to contrast this with the house of David Kirke in Ferryland that Gaulton and Tuck describe, more medieval than stylish, a rambling linear plan. What the Kirke house lacked in fashion, it made up for in size, containing much more usable space than the typical small English house of the day. The Winslow and Kirke houses, constructed at roughly the same time in these fledgling colonies, are quite different in form, fashion, and function.

These essays as a whole, then, bring us closer to realizing that the material life of these settlements differed widely, depending on the type of colony. Julia King and Edward Chaney provide a comparative study of three major sites in Maryland, that of Governor Charles Baltimore, one of the wealthiest men in the colony ca. 1666 until 1684, and two other plantations owned by middling gentry. In their comparative research of architecture and interior belongings, King and Chaney point to the fact that the size and exterior finish of Baltimore's house was clearly an extravagant show of proprietary status. However, when one compares the contents of the three sites, there is relatively little difference in the type of household goods that

each family owned. For a colonist like Baltimore, architecture — more than his household furnishings — became a sign of rank and status.

Beaudry, Goldstein, and Chartier suggest that new directions need to be taken in the study of these first colonies. Rather than continuing to research the relationship of old world to new, of continuity or adaptation from the English homeland, they argue that attention needs to focus more closely on the varieties of class and status within each of these colonial adventures. More sense must be made out of what the artifact norms were within a particular colony, rather than a comparison with the material life of an English homeland.

Regardless of the archaeological issues raised by these essays, there is one important underlying theme. In most cases, the historic players involved with these iconic settlements have merely been names on a page, persons connected to dates, people long disappeared. The recent burgeoning of historical archaeology has come, in part, from the desire of lay people today to make their past, their heritage, somehow tangible. Jeffrey Brain's comment sums up the importance of direct relationship of past things to people today: "On the floor of the storehouse in the southeastern corner was a caulking iron, as evocative an object of shipbuilding as could be imagined. Holding that tool, a well-built *Virginia* [one of the vessels involved in Maine's Popham colony], and its trans-Atlantic crossings become very real" (106).

This volume of *Avalon Chronicles* is an important collection for anyone interested in early English colonial ventures in the New World. What is important is that through such studies, historical names in scholarly textbooks take on a more human face, and become more meaningful to ordinary people. That meaning comes from the fact that we can actually see and touch the plate from David Kirke's table or a wine glass from Lord Baltimore's cupboard. By discovering the things of history, the past can relate much more directly to the present. We realize these were people much like us, surrounding themselves with objects that were the everyday necessities of their time, objects that still remain.

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Four Centuries and the City: Perspectives on the Historical Geography of St. John's. Edited by Alan G. Macpherson; cartography by Charles M. Conway. St. John's, NL: Department of Geography, Memorial University of Newfoundland, c2005, ISBN 0889013691

FOUR CENTURIES and the City: Perspectives on the Historical Geography of St. John's chronicles the historical evolution of St. John's from the period of European contact to the first years of the twenty-first century. This book makes a significant contribution to the social and physical sciences on St. John's as both a city and a