

of mark identification, a more explicit and detailed discussion of dating would have been a supreme asset. This alone, had it been present, would have made this book an essential purchase for historical archaeologists and set a new standard in the discipline. As it is, it serves as a very good update of an old standard.

Now, the best way to evaluate the utility of an identification manual is to put it through its paces using some actual artifacts. Consequently, I put this guide to work on some already identified English ceramic tablewares from my own doctoral research here in British Columbia, dating ca. 1885-1930, along with some sherds from SFU's reference collection. Of eight marks from seven manufacturers present in my assemblage, which I originally identified using Godden's *Encyclopedia of British Pottery and Porcelain Marks* and other sources, I found five in Gibson's guide (although there were entries for all seven manufacturers). Not bad. Using the SFU collection, I found seven of nine manufacturers in Gibson's book but in only two cases was I able to locate the identical mark. Granted, most of these reference specimens date after the turn of the twentieth century; however, this highlights one of the shortcomings of the volume, which the author herself acknowledges. There were also date discrepancies between sources and this is where it would have been helpful for Gibson to clearly document and explain her revised dates.

Despite its shortcomings, Gibson's manual is a worthy and welcome update and expansion of the Praetzelis original, and its small size in comparison to other guides makes it handy to carry in the field. In its use of photos of actual specimens rather than idealized drawings, and the author's effort to collate information from multiple sources, this volume is an intuitive and valuable single source for preliminary dating of British ceramic marks. It does not claim to be comprehensive (except in that misleading back-cover summary), which it isn't, and in this sense it reminds

me of Godden's *Handbook of British Pottery and Porcelain Marks*, a pocket-sized abbreviation of the original *Encyclopedia*. In each case, their handiness is both an asset and a frustrating drawback. As such, neither can be used alone but rather as a supplement to other identification guides, and ultimately users will find it necessary to go back to the classic sources to fill in the gaps.

Nevertheless, I heartily recommend this book as a useful first stop for academic, professional and avocational archaeologists working on 19th and 20th century historic sites, particularly in Western North America. If you only have room in your pack for one ceramic dating guide it should be this one, and I look forward to road testing it next time I'm in the field.

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BOOK REVIEW:

Archaeologists as Activists: Can Archaeologists Change the World?

Edited by M. Jay Stottman. University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, AL. 207pp, 13 illustrations, hardcover, index. ISBN: 978-0-8173-1712-6 (hardcover), 978-0-8173-5622-4 (paperback). \$46.00 (h/c), \$29.95 (p/b). 2010.

"Any archaeologist can be an activist archaeologist; we just have to reconceptualize archaeology as activism."
(Stottman 2010:13)

The product of a session at the 2004 Society for Historical Archaeology annual meeting called "Can Archaeology Save the World?," this book offers a collection of case-studies highlighting the trials and tribulations of being an "activist archaeologist." Introducing the volume, Stottman suggests that the movement towards an activist archaeology has been prompted by both an interest in the intersection between archaeology and heritage tourism, and concern over the rights and needs of descendant communities, in particular Indigenous peoples. Additionally, archaeologists are increasingly applying their craft to projects

of "public benefit," such as the identification of human remains in mass graves, and it is now commonplace for those working in cultural resource management (CRM) to be at the negotiation table with multiple "stakeholders." Stottman suggests that

through public archaeology, an archaeology can be conceived that can consciously be used to benefit contemporary communities and perhaps create positive change or help solve modern problems. It is public archaeology that forms the origins of an activist archaeology. (3)

Stottman then provides a brief synopsis of public archaeology, defined here as "a means to directly involve and educate the public in the discovery and experience of the past" (4). In particular, the role of archaeologists as "educators" in this ap-

proach is emphasized and critically examined, as is the need for self-reflexivity, which is seen as the pivotal aspect transforming public archaeology into activist archaeology.

The nine chapters in this volume offer reflections from various research projects that, either intentionally or somewhere along the way, became entangled with an activist archaeology. Public and historic archaeology feature prominently, emphasizing the connection between contemporary communities and the archaeological past to form a notion of "living heritage." This is significant. If the movement towards activism in archaeology is tied to recognizing the importance of heritage to *living* groups, then an activist approach to research concerning Aboriginal "pre-historic" or "pre-contact" heritage is certainly appropriate. Meanwhile, studies of "the deep past" of human history—Palaeolithic research, for example—may be a distance away yet.

The layout of the book itself identifies one of the key first hurdles to undertaking an activist archaeology: "reconceptualizing" the theory and practice of archaeology towards political goals. In "Part I: Reconceptualizing Archaeology for Activism," this shift in both perspective and focus is examined in detail.

For example, Christensen identified the importance of archaeologists situating themselves as "stakeholders" while undertaking research at the homesite of a 19th century suffragette in New York—a project that itself represents an "archaeology of activism." For Christensen, archaeologists recognizing their own political positions as researchers and making "our work relevant to people working in the present to effect social change" represent the core of activism in archaeology (34). McDavid similarly focuses on challenging white privilege and racism, beginning with the recognition of the archaeologist's own position within this larger social and historical dynamic. McDavid's research raises critical questions about the authority of archaeologists to represent the past to the public, and the challenges in pursuing reflexivity.

For Gadsby and Barnes, activist archaeology was a natural progression from their desire "to create projects that meant something to us and the people who were directly and indirectly influenced by them" (48), which ultimately led them to focus on labour and class-consciousness in the mill town of Hampden, Maryland. Similarly, Chidester describes the process of formulating research about the labour movement in Maryland, offering a very personal narrative of his struggles along the way.

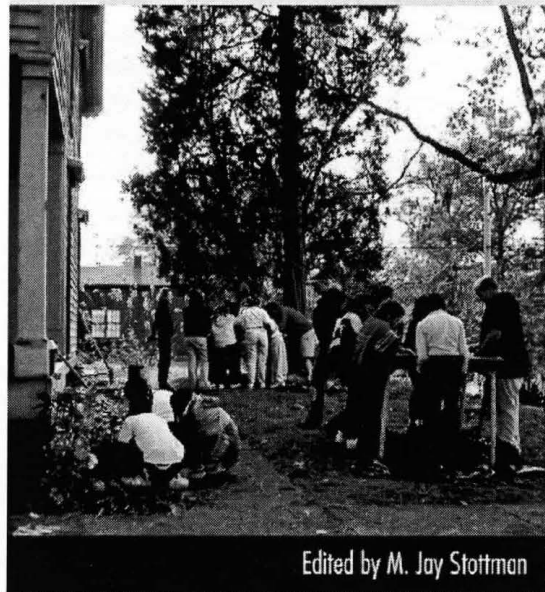
Finally, Jeppson provides a critical look at the current role of archaeology in American education, noting the difficulty of challenging the status quo in schools at a time when social studies is generally losing support in favour of courses with more quantifiable learning objectives and measurable assessments. This highlights the potential limitations of any activist archaeology attempting to operate within an oppressive political climate.

Stottman suggests that archaeologists should look to anthropology for guidance in activism and/or advocacy for political change, as applied anthropologists have been pursuing these goals for decades now (9). This forms the backdrop for "Part II: Becoming Archaeology Activists: Perspectives on Community Archaeology," wherein a focus on the tools of anthropology—participant observation, interviews and surveys—provides direction for those venturing outside of their archaeological training, moving away from "things" and toward "people."

Opening this section, a case-study is presented by Stahlgren

ARCHAEOLOGISTS AS ACTIVISTS

Can Archaeologists Change the World?



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that exposes the complexity of writing any one "history." In Stahlgren's view, "[a] single version does not tell the entire story, creating silenced histories. These silenced pasts are the pasts of those without power"—in this case, African American slaves (95). Revealing these histories is thus one role that an activist archaeologist can play, as Stahlgren discovered in a small community museum in Louisville, Kentucky. McBride and McBride also consider slave history in the United States, focusing on emancipation in the Civil War at Camp Nelson, Kentucky. Here, the sheer complexity of the histories and a public interested in archaeology converge to tell a more complicated story where the past and present are intricately connected.

Looking at the Portland Wharf located on the Ohio River, also in Kentucky, Prybylski and Stottman provide a look at the collaborative process of creating a cultural heritage park. Public surveys, education and participation programs, interviews, and demographic studies of visitors were integral in designing an appropriate public archaeology program that both instills a sense of community and draws tourists. Community collaboration is also the focus of Miller and Henderson's research at the Crab Orchard Springs Hotel in Kentucky, undertaken with the students of a local elementary school. Their 11-week program covered some basics about recording information and the relevance of the past, and while "they didn't really *find* anything" (150), students came to view their community differently as a result of their participation in the project.

Well-known for her writings on public archaeology, Barbara Little concludes the volume by reflecting on the role of archaeology in the modern world and "the need for scholars to take seriously both citizenship and the privilege of their positions in order to contribute in a positive way to our society" (155). She

discusses outreach, the structure of research, and the potential to showcase previously silenced histories as core themes. Observing that an activist archaeology provides “opportunities for awareness of our common humanity, our common struggles...in the face of cynicism and despair,” Little raises this critical point:

We can think of our own self-defined activism as intentional action to bring about social or political change, but we must be vigilant and continually self-critical and questioning about the types of changes we advocate. If we aim our activism at progressive social change and social justice, we should understand that we may be aiming at a moving target. (158)

Overall, I found this volume a welcome addition to my growing collection of books on the politics and social practice of archaeology. However, the volume suffers from what I have found to be typical of edited volumes: a lack of synthesis and internal critique of the case-studies or themes as a whole. While the case-studies themselves present different aspects of what is being presented as “activist archaeology”—some more radical than others—Stottman’s introduction is too brief to problematize the concept itself, its philosophical foundations, what it entails, or how to evaluate one’s effectiveness in activism. Instead, Stottman articulates some of the core ideas—a blend of critical theory, Marxist and feminist critique, with a collaborative research structure—and then provides this succinct definition:

To use archaeology to affect change in and advocate for contemporary communities, not as the archaeologist sees it but as the community itself sees it, defines activist archaeology. (8)

Centring the needs of “the community” is an appropriate strategy to address some of the ethical dilemmas and historical injustices of the archaeological project. It is a long over-due response to the valid accusations that archaeologists have faced since the first obelisk was removed from Egypt and the first shaman’s grave robbed here on the Northwest Coast.

It is, however, a problem to suggest either a) that there is such a thing as one, cohesive “community perspective”—the case-studies herein demonstrate that there is not—or b) that this “community view” should be foregrounded at the expense of the archaeologist’s own perspective. Ironically, in this scenario, the archaeologist becomes an apolitical mediator between the community and the public, playing a passive role that hides their own politics rather than actually being *an activist*, which entails standing up for what *they* believe in. The lack of critical analysis of either these issues or the motivations inspiring “activist archaeologists” beyond a desire to “make a difference in the world” (Stottman 1), prevents this volume from moving beyond a superficial and simplistic notion of activism. This, combined with little reflexivity offered concerning the lauded but challenging practice of “collaboration” (e.g., La Salle 2010), means that the strength of this volume lies primarily in the diversity and complexity of the case-studies, which together demonstrate that activism is extremely messy, highly personal, and can be very painful—important truths for any “activist archaeologist” to consider.

So, in answer to the question posed by this volume: Yes, archaeologists can change the world. We do it every day, with every grant application that we write, every introductory course we teach, every question about Indiana Jones we answer. The key to becoming an activist is committing oneself to challenging the status quo, not just in archaeology but in all aspects of our lives. Swimming against the current is tiring, and it is a relief to see in this volume that the community of self-defined activist archaeologists, in what is typically a very conservative discipline, continues to bloom.

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