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Unlocking the Past: Celebrating Historical Archaeology in North America

Lu Ann De Cunzo
University of Delaware, strasser@udel.edu

John H. Jameson Jr.
Journal of Community Archaeology and Heritage, jhameson@yahoo.com

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New Book

Unlocking the Past: Celebrating Historical Archaeology in North America

Edited by Lu Ann De Cunzo and John H. Jameson, Jr.

University Press of Florida, 256 pp., illustrations. 2005.



This new text, written for a broad audience and published by the Society for Historical Archaeology and the University Press of Florida, provides a number of chapters addressing aspects of African diasporas in North America.

Description from the Publisher:

Leading readers to archaeological sites from Canada to the Caribbean and through time from the era of early Norse voyages to World War II, this book describes compelling discoveries unearthed by archaeologists in search of North America's historical past. The essays challenge our ideas about the continent as they reveal how native and immigrant peoples interacted with their environment and each other over the course of five centuries.

Through the work of more than 30 archaeological teams, readers learn about the rich diversity of historical archaeology, exploring the who, what, where, when, how, and why of the discipline. The authors explain how they dissect soils, recover fragile objects, document each element of excavation, and piece together the many fragments of evidence from archives, libraries, and laboratories.

The tales in *Unlocking the Past* are organized into five themes. "Cultures in Contact" unravels the contributions of architecture, landscape, food, dining, burial practices, and other factors to our understanding of everyday life in the past. "Challenging and Changing Environments" highlights the techniques, resources, and questions that historical archaeologists use to understand the roots of ways of thinking about and acting on the land. Through burial remains left beneath streets and tall buildings, "Building Cities" portrays urban life in large cities like New York, World Heritage cities like Quebec, and industrial cities like Oakland, California. "Making a Living in Rural America" explores the rural tradition in North American history as archaeologists "read" the traces of ancient farms, ranches, potteries, and mills. "Cultures in Conflict" introduces the archaeology of colonial wars, the U.S. Civil War, the epic Battle of Little Bighorn, and World War II.

Lu Ann De Cunzo is associate professor of anthropology and early American culture at the University of Delaware, Newark. John H. Jameson Jr. is senior archaeologist with the National Park Service's Southeast Archeological Center in Tallahassee, Florida.