

African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter

Volume 14
Issue 4 December 2011

Article 28

12-1-2011

The Materiality of Freedom: Archaeologies of Postemancipation Life

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Recommended Citation

Barnes, Jodi A. (2011) "The Materiality of Freedom: Archaeologies of Postemancipation Life," *African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter*: Vol. 14 : Iss. 4 , Article 28.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/adan/vol14/iss4/28>

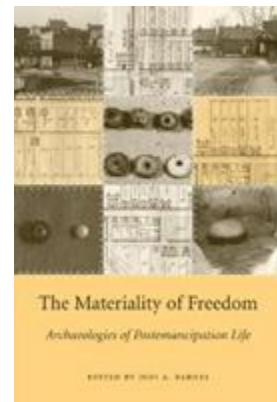
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New Book

***The Materiality of Freedom:
Archaeologies of Postemancipation Life***
Edited by Jodi A. Barnes
University of South Carolina Press,
Cloth, 291 pp., ISBN-13: 978-1611170344, 2011.

Description from the Publisher:

The Materiality of Freedom uses the lens of archaeology to provide original perspectives on the painful Reconstruction and Jim Crow eras by studying the material culture inherent in the struggles for racial equality in America and the Caribbean. Editor Jodi A. Barnes and a cast of notable scholars focus their essays on racial and social strife experienced by African Americans seeking to exercise their newly won civil rights following the Civil War. By studying material objects in a variety of contexts, archaeologists enrich historical narratives and offer grounded insights on the racial and social strife experienced by people of African descent. Building on the body of literature on African American archaeology, the twenty-two contributors to this volume use historical records, maps, and artifacts to examine the material-culture dimensions of churches, cemeteries, plantations, communities, neighborhoods, and towns.



The contributors to this collection assert that exploring the disheartening past of African Americans is essential to understanding contemporary issues of race and power as they delve into the archaeology of places such as the Harriet Tubman Home, the Phyllis Wheatley Home for Girls, Boston Saloon, and Alexandria, Virginia's Contrabands and Freedmen's Cemetery. Urban archaeology methods are also applied to prominent areas of Auburn, New York, Chicago, and the Old Salem Historical District in Winston-Salem. The Materiality of Freedom bridges past and present with community-based research and a combination of archaeological method and theory to highlight contemporary issues of class, gender, race, and social inequality. As these essays open new vistas on the social

construction of race and racism, they also demonstrate a more hopeful view on the building of black communities and in the United States and the Caribbean.