

# African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter

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Volume 5  
Issue 2 April 1998

Article 10

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4-1-1998

## African Americans in Pennsylvania: Shifting Historical Perspectives

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### Recommended Citation

Trotter, Joe William Jr. and Smith, Eric Ledell (1998) "African Americans in Pennsylvania: Shifting Historical Perspectives," *African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter*: Vol. 5 : Iss. 2 , Article 10.  
Available at: <http://scholarworks.umass.edu/adan/vol5/iss2/10>

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## *African Americans in Pennsylvania: Shifting Historical Perspectives*

Joe William Trotter, Jr. and Eric Ledell Smith, Editors, 1997. *African Americans in Pennsylvania: Shifting Historical Perspectives*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. xv + 519 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, index. \$45.00(cloth), \$19.95 (paper).

This anthology volume brings together an outstanding collection of research papers that together present a detailed picture of the African-American experience in the commonwealth from the 17th century founding of Pennsylvania through the postindustrial era of the late 20th century. While the scholarly community has had access to these materials in the journals and specialized monographs in which most originally appeared, their assembly here is not only constitutes a convenience for researchers, but also presents these essays in a form accessible to an educated general audience that includes community leaders and policy makers.

The volume opens with an introductory review of the historical literature on African Americans in Pennsylvania by the senior editor. This is a comprehensive assessment of the major themes that historians have addressed, not just an overview of the papers presented in this volume, and accordingly it is a valuable resource in itself.

The 19 other contributions are divided into four sections: The Commercial Economy (1684-1840), The Industrializing Era (1840-1870), The Industrial Era (1870-1945), and The Transformation of the Black Community (1945-1985). Part 1 documents the transformation of enslaved Africans into free African Americans. Part 2 considers the impacts of early industrialization, urbanization and emancipation. Part 3 examines de facto segregation, immigration, the Depression and the World Wars to emphasize new forms of race relations. Finally, Part 4 considers the effects of the civil rights movement, deindustrialization, and the spread of urban poverty. Overall, the essays address the interplay of race, class, and gender issues, predominately in the major metropolitan centers of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh.