

*Historical Archaeology
of the Chesapeake*

PAUL A. SHACKEL AND
BARBARA J. LITTLE (EDITORS)

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Over 20 years have passed since Paul A. Shackel and Barbara J. Little's *Historical Archaeology of the Chesapeake* was first published by the Smithsonian Institution Press. This Percheron Press reissue once again presents a strong collection of essays that continue to represent significant themes in Chesapeake archaeology, while allowing readers to reflect on how the discipline has grown in its variety and matured in its complexity over the last two decades.

In their new introduction, Shackel and Little take stock of the evolution of the discipline since the original publication of this volume. To this end, the editors divide the new introduction into three central themes of current research, while highlighting selected work that addresses questions of heritage building, race and racism, and the public and news media. While this new introduction does a fine job situating these essays in their historical and theoretical contexts, it also draws a line between academic or research-driven archaeology and that which is completed by archaeologists working in cultural resources management (CRM).

In the first chapter of the original publication, the editors stated that many historical archaeologists working in the Chesapeake

published their work in scholarly publications or in the "gray literature" of CRM reports. In an effort to be both inclusive and comprehensive, the original edition of this work included essays from professionals working in both academia and CRM. It is therefore surprising that the new introduction addresses only achievements within academia. While the works they include are certainly important and do warrant mention, the omission of the equally important work done by archaeologists in the CRM field is somewhat perplexing, particularly given the tremendous contributions of compliance-driven archaeology in the last 20 years of archaeology in the Chesapeake region.

As the editors point out, the average CRM publication has a limited audience, but since these reports are typically made available for researchers by the State Historic Preservation Officer, they are accessible to those with a valid interest in the field. At the same time, over the last two decades, state and federal agencies have increasingly required a public component to be included, even in compliance projects. Work in the last decade alone by the Maryland State Highway Administration (Belvoir/Scott's Plantation and War of 1812 archaeology); National Park Service, National Capital Region (System-wide Archeological Inventory Program); and the Delaware Department of Transportation (U.S. 301 Project) illustrate how the field of CRM has embraced new media and has made accessibility to a wider public part of their core mission. CRM archaeologists have made significant contributions to the vibrancy and scholarship of historical archaeology of

the Chesapeake in the last 20 years, and the omission of this vast body of research is a surprising oversight.

Aside from this one criticism, Shackel and Little's volume continues to be a substantive work that serves as a starting point for readers in their exploration of this dynamic field. With a wide audience in mind, Shackel and Little begin their book with a succinct overview of both the history of the region and the development of the critical questions that drive historical archaeology in the Chesapeake region. The editors then divide the book by temporal and thematic periods, carrying the reader from early European settlement in the 17th century to the research questions central to plantation and landscape studies and 18th-century life. The volume concludes with a collection of a few articles associated with the 19th century. At the beginning of each section, the editors provide introductory overviews that help to acquaint the reader with the forthcoming topics and contextualize them in the broader theoretical approaches used by archaeologists to address questions regarding Chesapeake culture. One early criticism found in reviews of the original publication of the volume was that the 19th century is underrepresented. While I agree the contributions contained in this section are underrepresented relative to other

periods, the editors did provide "References Cited" and "Suggested Readings from the Contributors" sections, which readers could utilize to further explore such topics that interest them.

As for the essays themselves, Shackel and Little have done a commendable job compiling papers that cover a substantial portion of research conducted up to the point of the original publication. Even after 20 years, these studies continue to be immensely relevant in the study of the history and culture of the region. The collection of essays draws on the work of numerous archaeologists who, over the years, have become the eminent scholars within the field. The contributions by such noteworthy scholars as Julia King, Patricia Samford, Mark Leone, Stephen Potter, and the editors themselves, just to name a few, serve as a testament of the enduring importance of this volume. To the new generation of archaeologists and those practicing archaeologists not already familiar with the Chesapeake region, Shackel and Little's book is essential reading. At the same time, this volume is engaging and accessible enough to satisfy wider audiences as well.

JASON SHELLNHAMER
RUMMEL, KLEPPER & KAHL, LLP
81 MOSHER STREET
BALTIMORE, MD 21217-4243