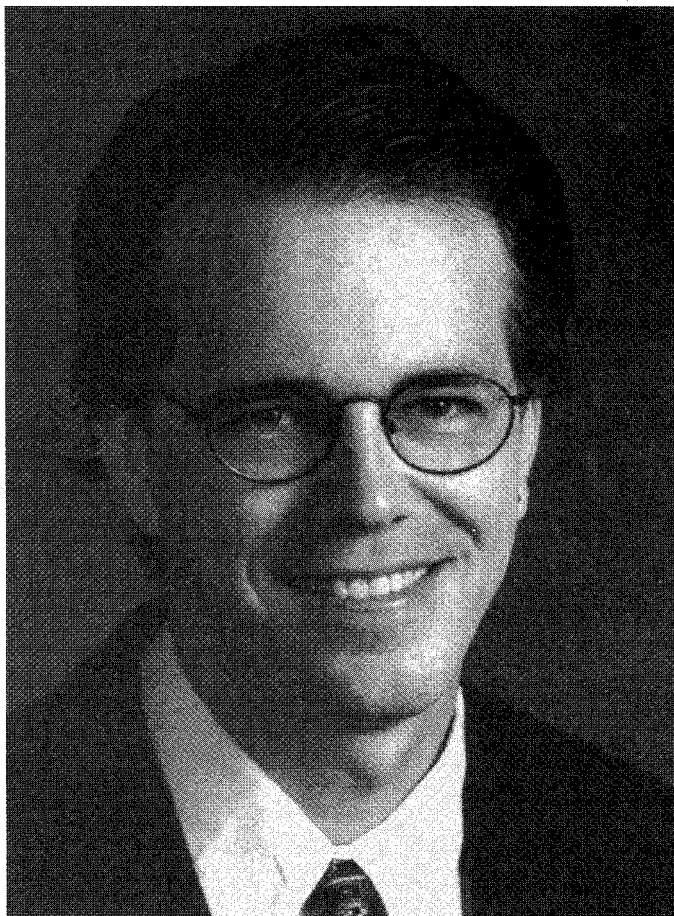


## John L. Cotter Award in Historical Archaeology



Paul R. Mullins 2000

The Society for Historical Archaeology presented the John L. Cotter Award in Historical Archaeology to Paul R. Mullins at the annual meeting of the Society for Historical Archaeology Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology in Québec City, Québec, Canada in 2000. Mullins was the initial recipient of this new award offered by the society to recognize a truly outstanding, single achievement by a person newly entering the discipline.

Paul Mullins has been nurtured by and in turn has given to a number of academic communities in his formative career. He received his Bachelor of Science with a minor in Anthropology from James Madison University in 1984. He studied historical archaeology at the University of Maryland, College Park participating in Mark Leone's Archaeology at Annapolis program, where, in 1990, he received what was their highest degree, a Masters of Applied Anthropology. He entered the graduate program at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in 1990 and received his Ph.D. in 1996, awarded with distinction supervised by a committee that included Enoch Page, Daniel Horowitz, and Robert Paynter. He has served on the faculty of George Mason University and is presently an Assistant

Professor of Anthropology at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis. Paul's encyclopedic knowledge of popular and arcane material culture, his generous and creative mind, and his wry sense of humor have left an indelible mark on the historical archaeology programs, their graduate students, and faculty at University of Maryland and University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

Paul has established himself as a prolific and thoughtful scholar of many sides of the American experience. He is a frequent contributor at annual meetings of our society, presenting papers on topics as varied as Archaeology at Annapolis, African American material culture and life, white consumer culture, and the ways Europeans were carved, engraved, sketched, and inscribed by indigenous people around the world. He has contributions in some of the more important publications of the past decade, including articles in Leone and Potter's *Historical Archaeologies of Capitalism*, De Cunzio and Herman's *Historical Archaeology and the Study of American Culture*, Leone and Silberman's *Invisible America*, Wurst and Fitts's recent special issue of *Historical Archaeology*, *Confronting Class*, and his own co-edited volume with Shackel and Warner, *Annapolis Past: Historic Archaeology in Annapolis, Maryland*. His work has considered the lives of Shenandoah Valley potters, the aesthetics and political economy of baseball cards, the fantasies provoked by pilgrimages to Graceland, and, with Marlys Pearson, the curatorial habits of Barbie aficionados.

His most sustained work, however, has considered the free African American community of Annapolis and the ways these people negotiated mass consumption and white racism. Indeed, he receives the Cotter Award for his monograph on this subject, *Race and Affluence: An Archaeology of African America and Consumer Culture*. This study brings an urgency and significance to historical archaeology, a goal recognized by many and realized by few. Working with objects discovered in archaeological contexts, Mullins realizes our discipline's populist promise to study all of a community and not just the curated few. His analyses of how the African American community of turn of the twentieth century Annapolis produced, used, thought about, and discarded the things of the burgeoning mass consumer market leads to a vision of a highly heterogeneous, conflicted, and vibrant community, living for itself in the context of discrimination. Through illuminating these people's lives, Mullins addresses two issues that continue to fixate American culture. The first is the debate about the morality of consumption, distinctively portrayed herein from various African American perspectives. The second is the arrogant practice and discourse of white supremacy, a ferocious shaper of the mass consumer market that was constantly met by creative and variegated material responses by the African American community. These themes emerge from his careful readings of objects and texts, and are gracefully combined in the best tradition of historical archaeological writing. The result is a study in which archaeological research links the worlds of the past with our present, and thereby contributes a unique and powerful perspective on these most American of dilemmas.

*Race and Affluence* is a study that will influence historical archaeology for its perspectives, data, and methods. It will have repercussions beyond the bounds of our discipline and contribute to a more nuanced view of the issues of race and racism in the United States. It is but one in what promises to be a very interesting series of studies to come from Paul Mullins.