Island Lives: Historical Archaeologies of the Caribbean.
PAUL FARNSWORTH, EDITOR
The University of Alabama Press, Tuscaloosa, 2001. 408 pp., 77 figs., 12 tables, bibl., index. $29.95 paper.

Island Lives: Historical Archaeologies of the Caribbean, is a welcome addition to the growing literature on historical archaeology in the Caribbean. The editor, Paul Farnsworth, has brought together 10 papers by 11 authors that provide a range of historical archaeology in the Caribbean. As Farnsworth acknowledges in the preface, no one book, even a collection of papers, can hope to represent historical archaeology for such a large region as the Caribbean, yet this book does introduce the reader to research trajectories taking place in different parts of the region. The first four chapters of the book, by Charles R. Ewen, André Delpuech, Jay B. Haviser, and David R. Watters, provide introductions to the general range of historical archaeological research in Spanish, French, Dutch, and British colonial spheres. This section is perhaps the most useful for the reader seeking an entree to research orientations pursued in each of these areas, as the authors have made extensive reference to publications that are otherwise difficult to procure. Ewen’s chapter, “Historical Archaeology in the Colonial Spanish Caribbean,” notes that while Spanish shipwrecks have been the focus of disproportionate research, the investigations of terrestrial Spanish colonial sites have been limited in either scope and/or publication, with several notable exceptions (Puerto Real, La Isabella, Caparra, and San Juan). Ewen also observes that the majority of this research principally deals with the first 100 years of Spanish colonial effort. He hopes that the gradual thawing of relationships between the U.S and Cuba will result in greater access to substantive results from that island.

The second chapter is to this reviewer perhaps the most valuable. Delpuech’s contribution presents a discussion of historical archaeology in Guadeloupe, although the title suggests that it refers to the entire Francophone Caribbean. This chapter’s value is that while there are other published discussions of historical archaeology in the Dutch, Spanish, and British Caribbean, this is the first English language treatment of historical archaeology on any Francophone island. Delpuech addresses the kinds of historical archaeology that have been pursued on Guadeloupe and its dependencies since the establishment of the French government office, the Service Régional d’Archéologie, in 1992. Although historical archaeology has only recently begun on Guadeloupe, a number of projects have been undertaken focusing on documenting industrial remains of sugar, coffee, and indigo plantations, military fortifications, and the salvaging of burials threatened by coastal erosion. Furthermore, Delpuech outlines and discusses the potential of other aspects of historical archaeology that have not yet been addressed. These aspects include nautical archaeology associated with Spanish and later fleets, the historic-period Carib settlements, the nature of the earliest French colonial settlements, and the archaeology of the African presence on the island.

The chapter by Haviser, dealing with the islands of the Netherlands Antilles, provides a strong testament to the active role the Archaeological-Anthropological Institute of the Netherlands Antilles has played in documenting and evaluating cultural resources on its territories. In addition to the government-based archaeological research, academically oriented research has been undertaken primarily on St. Eustatius and St. Maarten. Historical archaeology in the Netherlands Antilles has focused on a broad range of site types, including religious sites associated with the earliest Jewish populations in the Caribbean, urban sites, fortifications, plantation sites, and even the site of a “slave camp” or holding pen on Curaçao. A particularly interesting aspect of this chapter is a discussion of the cultural impact of historical archaeological research in the region; this should be required reading for all those who work in small communities.

Watters contributes the final chapter of the national sphere-focused reviews. This discussion, on the British colonial Caribbean, emphasizes historical archaeology of the British colonies in the Lesser Antilles, where much of the work has been carried out in association with local historical societies or nongovernmental organizations such as island-based National Trusts. The chapter lists a variety of historic contexts that have been investigated, largely echoing the categories in the previous chapters (i.e., military, urban, plantation) with the significant exception of studies of Maroon sites or those associated with self-emancipated people. Watters notes that work on Jamaica is particularly important and can hopefully be augmented with research on other islands with known settings of marronage. In terms of future directions, the Lesser Antilles perspective of this chapter foregrounds some interesting questions, such as how comparative work between islands of different colonial heritages might develop and the problem of colonial heritage and identity itself, as Watters notes that some islands repeatedly switched hands throughout the colonial period.

The remaining six chapters in the second and third sections of the book present case studies of archaeological research on individual islands. Norman F. Barka summarizes his decades-long research program on St. Eustatius through the discussion of the island’s settlement pattern during several of its historical periods. Douglas Armstrong presents the results of archaeological work at the East End community, on the island of St. John in the U.S. Virgin Islands, to address the process of community formation. Lydia M. Pulsipher and Conrad “Mac” Goodwin discuss their long-term research at Galways plantation on Montserrat. These three papers are grouped together under the heading of “Caribbean Landscapes.”

The next section, “Caribbean Cultures,” begins with Thomas C. Lotfield’s presentation of two cases of creolization from Barbados: one based on the locations of fortifications and the other drawing on a specific type of ceramic, Barbadian red wares. The next two papers, by Paul Farnsworth and Laurie A. Wilkie, respectively, are based on archaeological work in the Bahamas. Farnsworth’s chapter discusses the development of Bahamian folk housing as a compromise between African and European sensibilities. Wilkie discusses the material culture of enslaved Africans in the Bahamas and views the assemblages as evidence of a continued “African aesthetic,” enduring despite planters’ efforts to instill English values in the enslaved population.
Cultural Resources Archaeology: An Introduction.

THOMAS W. NEUMANN AND ROBERT M. SANFORD


This volume is intended to provide a basic introductory, college-level text for legally mandated archaeological studies. As such, this book would be the first comprehensive textbook for the study of compliance-based archaeology in the United States.

Cultural Resources Archaeology: An Introduction is organized into seven chapters, and includes two appendices and a glossary. The first chapter discusses what the authors refer to as “professional archaeology” and includes a useful history of compliance-based archaeological studies. It also includes a discussion of the current practice of archaeology in the United States, which provides an excellent context for understanding the remainder of the volume. The second chapter, “Laws, Regulations, and Guidelines,” summarizes the legal mandate for compliance-based archaeological studies. This chapter is, in many ways, the most useful in the book and reflects an excellent understanding of the legal process that drives and defines compliance-based archaeology. The next four chapters, which describe the process of conducting compliance-based studies, are organized by project phase. The final chapter, titled “Report Preparation and Production,” discusses laboratory analyses and curation in addition to report preparation. Appendix A, “Federal Regulations, Standards, and Guidelines on Documentation,” summarizes the federal legal requirements for reporting compliance-based archaeological studies. Appendix B presents the code of ethics and standards of research performance for the Register of Professional Archaeologists (RPA) and the code of ethics for the American Cultural Resources Association (ACRA).

Cultural Resources Archaeology is a useful textbook in some ways, but it contains flaws. It may seem to be a trivial point, but the problems with this volume begin with its title. The term “cultural resources archaeology” is meaningless. Archaeological resources are cultural resources. A much more appropriate title would have been, “Cultural Resource Management Archaeology,” or “Compliance-Based Archaeology.” The authors use a number of terms in the text that are either not generally accepted in the field or are objectionable to at least some segment of the profession. A couple of examples will suffice for this review. The term “professional archaeology” is defined on page 235 by the authors as “the practice of archaeology outside of an academic setting, usually in response to historic preservation law.” Our colleagues in academia would probably be surprised to learn that they are not “professional archaeologists,” but this certainly appears to be the intent of the authors. Another term used to describe compliance-based archaeology is “extra-academic archaeology.” Use of that term is unfortunate, as is any terminology that further separates archaeologists working in academic settings from those in compliance-based programs.

Some of the problems with this volume go beyond terminology. The authors, while discussing the concept of site integrity, state on page 33, “For example, a plowed Mississippian site probably would not have sufficient integrity for listing on the National Register, since there are a large number of less disturbed Mississippian sites already known and excavated.” Any archaeologist who has worked on Mississippian-period sites recognizes that virtually every such site has been plowed and that plowing alone is not normally enough to degrade the integrity of such a site to the point it would be ineligible for listing on the National Register. The authors were correct to stress the link between site integrity and National Register significance, but they certainly picked the wrong example to illustrate their point.

A second example of a serious misstatement in the volume was found on page 89, during the discussion of Phase I fieldwork. The authors said: “Some states, such as Georgia, require that written permission be obtained from the landowner and submitted to the SHPO prior to the start of field work, even if it is the landowner requesting the Phase I survey.” That may be a good idea but in the case of Georgia, it simply is not true. Georgia does not require that SHPO even be notified prior to undertaking a compliance-based survey, much less that written landowner permissions be submitted.

The authors did a poor job discussing the role of specialists in compliance-based studies. A notable example is that geomorphology and geomorphologists are not even mentioned in the volume, while “high magnification lithic-use wear analysis” is mentioned repeatedly as an example of a specialty that is often subcontracted by firms. It is true that geomorphologists have little to offer projects conducted on landforms that have been stable since before the peopling of the New World, but many areas in the eastern United States contain alluvial or colluvial deposits that are best analyzed and interpreted by geomorphologists.

Another criticism of the volume is that the authors did not do an adequate job of discussing ethics and the need for ethical behavior in compliance-based archaeology. The authors did include copies of the code of ethics and standards of research performance for the RPA and the code of ethics for ACRA in an appendix but did not explain what the standards mean or how they should be applied. It would have been appropriate for the authors to include a complete chapter on ethics and standards of research performance given the audience the text was designed to reach.