

# Anthro Notes

National Museum of Natural History Newsletter for Teachers

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## THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN LIFE

Excavations of slave cabins in the late 1960's marked the beginning of a new and important field known as African American archaeology.

African American archaeology studies the daily lives of past African American communities through the analysis of the tangible material remains recovered from the places where members of these communities once lived and worked. From the careful study of broken pottery, mortar, food bone, tools, buttons, beads, and other objects, archaeologists are able to piece together information on the ways African Americans built their houses, prepared their food, and crafted household equipment and personal possessions.

Archaeologists engaged in this research are ultimately seeking answers to questions such

as: How was an African heritage transplanted, replaced, or reinterpreted in America? In what ways are the recovered artifacts from African American sites the reflection of cultural patterns or of social conditions--poverty and restricted access to material goods? What are the differences in the material lives of slaves, free blacks, and tenant farmers and of African Americans living in urban versus rural communities? How did African Americans survive the rigors of everyday life?

Archaeologists first began to study African Americans as part of a growing scholarly interest emphasizing the history of people who created or left behind few written documents. Enslaved African Americans were generally denied the opportunity to learn reading and writing skills. Even after emancipation, many former slaves, lacking



other alternatives, were forced to return to plantations as wage laborers and land renters, where they remained poor and illiterate. Thus, most written records used to examine the five hundred year history of African Americans are the products of European Americans whose understanding of African American culture was often flawed. Additionally, these records are one-sided as these contain only information that interested the author. For example, slaveowners and plantation managers generally recorded information on slave health, his or her capacity to perform work, and behavior considered deviant. These documents rarely contain descriptions of objects slaves made and used or of other cultural expressions.

The archaeological record is also biased. The archaeologist can only interpret abandoned, discarded, or lost objects preserved in buried deposits. This leaves out any object that may have been kept through the years and handed down from generation to generation or any object made of materials that do not preserve well underground. Moreover, artifacts provide the basis for inferences about particular aspects of behavior, not direct evidence of behavior. Therefore, the interpretation of the material record requires archaeologists to incorporate historical and ethnographic descriptions of behavior derived from written sources and oral tradition.

#### The Search for an African Heritage: Ceramics, Mud Houses, and Ritual Items

In the archaeological study of African American sites, archaeologists are particularly interested in artifacts suggestive of either an African heritage or of newly created African American traditions. Although the evidence thus far uncovered is fragmentary, and interpretations are tentative, these finds supply empirical data for the widely held view that enslaved Africans and their descendants nurtured and sustained cultural traditions in spite of the oppressive, dehumanizing conditions of slavery. Some of the most convincing evidence that supports the persistence of African heritage includes: slave-made ceramics recovered from plantations in South Carolina and

Virginia; the building of African-style mud-wall houses on 18th century plantations in South Carolina; and ritual paraphernalia of a traditional healer recovered from a cabin in Texas occupied during and after slavery.

The most frequently recovered artifacts produced by African Americans are ceramics used for preparing, serving, and storing food. So far, ceramics produced by African Americans have been recovered from numerous sites in South Carolina, Virginia, and several islands in the Caribbean. In the southern United States, these ceramics called "colonoware" are low-fired, unglazed earthenware that resemble traditional pottery produced by Native Americans. Until the past decade, archaeologists thought that only Native Americans had produced colonoware, and it still seems likely that Indians created certain European-styled vessels such as shallow plates and bowls with ring feet that English settlers would have valued. But now most scholars agree that African slaves produced a special variety of this handbuilt pottery, particularly the rounded forms, because much of it has been found at sites that date long after the demise of local Indians.

In South Carolina, the first real clue that African Americans made their own pottery came when fragments turned up that appeared to have been fired on the premises of Drayton Hall, a plantation located west of Charleston, South Carolina. Colonoware often comprises 80 to 90 percent of the ceramics found at sites occupied by slaves in the 1700's. Further research by Leland Ferguson, an historical archaeologist at the University of South Carolina, has shown that some of the South Carolina forms resemble pottery still made in parts of West Africa today. More recently, he has identified markings on some pottery fragments that are similar to the cosmograms used in the traditional rituals of peoples in the Congo-Angolan region of Africa. Cosmograms symbolize the way a society perceives the universe. The markings consist of a cross enclosed in a circle, which represents the daily course of the sun and the continuity of life: birth, death, and rebirth.

Why is evidence of pottery making among enslaved African Americans important? The use of this pottery suggests that enslaved African Americans prepared food to suit their own taste, perhaps incorporating aspects of traditional African cuisines. Additionally, slaves also used these ceramics to prepare food for their masters, as colonoware accounts for a significant portion--sometimes more than half--of the ceramics used in planter households. This suggests that culinary techniques used by slaves influenced local southern white cuisine as well.

Excavations at the sites of Curriboo and Yaughan, two former indigo plantations in Berkeley County, South Carolina, revealed what may have been rectangular African-style houses designed and built by slaves. These slave quarters consisted of mud walls, presumably covered with thatched palmetto leaves, similar to thatched roof houses in many parts of Africa. Although no standing walls exist, archaeologists have found wall trenches containing a mortar-like clay. The presence of numerous pits, apparently used to extract clay, found throughout the sites, further suggests the use of clay as the primary construction material.

Since this discovery, a careful examination of written records has revealed several scattered references to slave-built, mud-walled structures. Indeed, previously unnoticed written descriptions seem to suggest that these African-style houses may have been commonplace. W.E.B. DuBois offered a description of palmetto-leaf construction in his 1908 survey of African and African-American houses. "The dwellings of slaves were palmetto huts," he wrote, "built by themselves of stakes and poles, with the palmetto leaf. The door, when they had any, was generally of the same materials, sometimes boards found on the beach. They had no floors, no separate apartments."

The mud houses at Curriboo and Yaughan plantation were built and occupied between 1740 and 1790. They were abandoned and replaced with European-American style framed dwellings in the early 1800's. This change in housing styles coincided with a period when many European Americans

came to view anything African as backward and inferior, and in the case of housing, unhealthy. As a result, many slave-holders began to impose their standards of appropriate housing upon slaves.

At the Jordan Plantation, approximately 60 miles south of the modern city of Houston, Texas, archaeologist Kenneth Brown uncovered an assemblage of artifacts apparently used in healing and divination rituals. The Jordan plantation operated as a slave-worked plantation from 1848 until emancipation, and continued with wage laborers, many of whom were former slaves of the plantation, until 1890. Nine cabins were excavated and the materials from several individual cabins revealed evidence of the specialized activities of a carpenter, seamstress, cattle herder (cowboy), and of a shaman/healer. The materials from the shaman's cabin consisted of the bases from cast iron kettles, pieces of utilized chalk, fragments of a small scale, bird skulls, animals paw, medicine bottles, ocean shells, doll parts, spoons, nails, knives, and chert scarpers. Many of these objects could have functioned in other activities and most likely did at various points in their lives. But when the artifacts are taken together, they suggest some form of ritual use. Support for this thesis comes from abundant ethnographic studies conducted in the Caribbean and parts of Africa that describe the use of wooden or metal trays, white chalk or powder, metal staffs, bird symbolism, and other objects used in healing rituals.

The assemblage of artifacts from the Jordan Plantation presents an excellent example of African Americans using mass-produced and reworked objects for a special African American meaning. Another example of the special use of manufactured objects is the occurrence of colored glass beads, particularly blue beads, that are found on slave sites throughout the south from Virginia to Texas. William Adams, an archaeologist at Oregon State University recently suggested that blue beads may be related to a widespread belief in the Moslem world, including parts of Africa, that a single blue bead worn or shown on clothing protected the wearer against the Evil Eye. Undoubtedly, other artifacts uncovered

from African American sites have been ignored by archaeologists who have been unable to decipher the special function certain objects occupied in African American culture.

#### Archaeological Evidence of Free and Freed African American Communities

Slave sites, the primary focus of African American archaeology, sometimes contain deposits that date after emancipation. Plantation sites containing deposits dating from before and after emancipation often reflect continuity from slave to free labor as was the case at the Jordan Plantation. However, a wide variety of African American sites have been studied; in fact, archaeological investigations at African American sites have been undertaken in at least 30 states, Canada, and several Caribbean islands. These investigations range from the home sites of well-known, often prominent individuals like Benjamin Banneker, Frederick Douglass, and W.E.B. Dubois, to entire towns such as Allensworth, California and Buxton, Iowa. Archaeologists have also examined African American neighborhoods in several cities and isolated rural settlements. For many of these sites, archaeology is the only source of information that describes the everyday lives of people who once lived at these locations.

Studies of free and freed African American communities have addressed questions similar to those of slave sites: What were the living conditions and basic material culture of these communities? What aspects of the archaeological record related to ethnic behavior and what aspects to economic and social conditions? Unlike the growing evidence at slave sites for ethnic behavior in ceramic production and use, architecture, and ritual objects, archaeological evidence of ethnicity at non-slave sites varies from site to site and is much more subtle. In some cases, for example at Benjamin Banneker's home site, no evidence of Banneker's ethnicity is revealed from the archaeological record. The assemblage from his 18th century farmstead in rural Maryland was found to be identical to those recovered from sites of European American settlers of similar social and economic status living at the same time

as Banneker. This degree of assimilation may characterize many other free African Americans living during the time of slavery who owned property and enjoyed a material life beyond bare necessities. However, bound by race, free blacks occupied a tenuous position, where they were at the constant mercy of whites, regardless of their material wealth.

Comparison between poor African Americans and poor European Americans suggests a similar pattern. Archaeology at Millwood, a plantation worked by tenant farmers and wage laborers from 1865 to 1925, revealed that the quality of material life was not based upon ethnicity or race but upon one's position in the plantation hierarchy. Archaeologist Charles Orser identified five classes of occupants living on the plantation (landlord, millwright, tenant, servant, and wage laborer), and observed that blacks and whites of the same class experienced similar material conditions.

Archaeological studies of African American neighborhoods in Alexandria, Virginia and Washington, DC suggest that ethnic behavior is most evident in food preferences. In both studies, the archaeological records of the African Americans were compared with those of European Americans of similar economic status. Although subtle differences were evident in purchased ceramics and other artifacts, the most striking difference was found in foodways (encompassing everything from food procurement, preparation, and consumption habits), an aspect of culture that frequently indicates ethnic preferences. The African Americans at both sites consumed much more pork than European Americans and displayed a particular preference for pigs' feet. Floral and faunal analyses indicated that an African American community in Washington also consumed collard greens and opossum.

Archaeology can also be used to examine material conditions associated with special circumstances experienced by African Americans. For example, preliminary work I conducted on sites associated with recently emancipated slaves suggest that ex-slaves along the Georgia coast were, in some cases,

(continued on p.14)

## TEACHING RESOURCES

from the National Museum of the American Indian...

Teaching kits for elementary school teachers:

American Indian Dolls, An Educational Resource Kit. \$6.70.

The Great Plains Art Activities. This teaching kit consists of three art activities for middle elementary students. \$2.75.

Artifact guides:

*On Your Own With Native American Cultures.* (Aztecs, Pomo, Taino, Winnebago, Shoshoni, Eskimo, Mississippians) \$2.75.

*On Your Own With Great North American Indians.* This guide highlights the lives of great orators and artists (Joseph Brant, Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse, Maria Martinez, Louise Keyser, Chief Joseph, Tecumseh, Geronimo) \$2.75.

Also available are free reading lists on the Northeast Woodlands, Plains, and North America, in general. Write: Publications, National Museum of the American Indian, Broadway at 155th St., New York, NY 10032.

[On November 28, the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, became the fifteenth museum of the Smithsonian Institution --the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). This new museum will be dedicated to the collection, preservation, study, and exhibition of American Indian languages, literature, history, art, and culture, and to significant native American involvement in areas of research and administration. Of the recently

chosen 25-member Board of Trustees, twelve are American Indians. A director for the new museum will be selected by the end of the summer. The NMAI is expected to open in the mid- to late 1990s on the east side of the National Air and Space Museum, located on the Mall.]

from WETA...

The recent Smithsonian World program, "Tales of the Human Dawn," featuring several distinguished paleoanthropologists, is available in video for \$44.95. A teacher's guide providing a background essay, pre- and post-viewing activities, a glossary, and a bibliography can be purchased separately for \$3.00. Write to: WETA, P.O. Box 2626, Washington, DC 20013. Request their free catalog that includes other programs suitable for anthropology teaching.

from NOVA...

Teacher guides (\$3.00 each) and videocassettes and films on Nova programs, for rent or purchase, on such programs as "The Children of Eve," relating to evolutionary biology, and "Buried in Ice," on the mummified remains of arctic explorers. Write to: W G B H, NOVA Teacher's Guide, Box 2222-S90, South Easton, MA 02375. For information on NOVA videocassettes and films, write to: Coronet/MTI Film & Video, 108 Wilmot Rd., Deerfield, IL 60015; 1-800-621-2131. Illinois and Alaska residents call

collect: (312) 940-1260.

from SUNY College, Potsdam...

"Mystery Fossil," (copyright 1989) a Macintosh computer learning exercise for introductory anthropology classes to help students think like paleoanthropologists. The



exercise asks students to determine the species and phylogenetic position of an unknown hominid fossil by comparing it against known fossils. Several views of each fossil are provided with data on its discovery, setting, associated natural and cultural material, dating, and morphology. Required: Macintosh Plus, Macintosh SE (minimum 1 megabyte memory) or Macintosh II; System 4.0 or later. Hypercard version 1.2 or later, Home stack updated for version 1.2, printing resource file and Macintosh system file. Write: "Mystery Fossil," c/o John Omohundro, Anthropology Department, MacVicar Hall, Potsdam C, Potsdam, NY 13676.

from the National Center for Science Education (NCSE)...

#### brochures-

*The Record of Evolution* by Eric Delson (American Museum of Natural History); *Origin Myths* by Robert Carneiro (American Museum of Natural History); *Scientific Creationism, Evolution and Race* by Eugenie Scott, NCSE. Single copies are free if a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided. Additional copies are \$.25 each (\$.20 for 100 or more). [The American Anthropological Association, 1703 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009; (202) 232-8800, also has these and other brochures on this topic available for the same cost.]

#### newsletters-

*NCSE Reports*. Formerly *Creation/Evolution Newsletter*, this bimonthly publication keeps teachers abreast of developments in the controversy. Subscription \$15 (\$18 outside U.S.).

Five NCSE Committees of Correspondence publish newsletters of their own: California. *BACC Science!* \$5; Iowa. *Iowa Committee of Correspondence Newsletter* \$15; Illinois. *The Pseudo-Science Monitor* \$17; Ohio. *Newsletter of the Ohio Center for Science Education* \$10; and Ontario. *OASIS Newsletter* \$5.

#### videotape-

"Science Showdown." An entertaining mock debate held at a meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists,

enacting well-known debating mistakes. \$10, 10-day rental. \$20, purchase.

#### audiotape-

"Only a Theory: Presenting Evolution to the Public." A 1989 symposium at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. \$8 (2 tapes).

All of the materials can be ordered from the NCSE, P.O. Box 9477, Berkeley, CA 94709.

[Information from *Teaching Anthropology Newsletter*, no. 15 (Fall 1989). This newsletter is available free of charge by writing: Paul A. Erickson, Editor, TAN, Department of Anthropology, St. Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3H 3C3]

In addition, "Creationism: A Teacher's Resource Guide" is available from the Public Information Office, Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560.

## INDIAN EDUCATION CLEARINGHOUSE

The National Indian Education Clearinghouse (NIEC) at Arizona State University is developing a computerized directory of American Indian materials and resources for research and curriculum development for all levels of teaching. The NIEC database will be accessible through school and public libraries. All publications and materials incorporated into the database first will be reviewed by experts in American Indian studies to ensure quality control.

The NIEC seeks good publications and curriculum materials for its database, which they expect to be operational late September 1990. Send three copies of copyrighted American Indian/Alaska Native curriculum materials and one copy of non-copyrighted materials to: Mimi McBride, National Indian Education Clearinghouse, Hayden Library, Room 204, Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ 85287; (602) 965-6490.

## Teacher's Corner: Choosing Texts for Studying Japan

Japan is the land of samurai, haiku poetry, flower arrangements, tea ceremonies, and miraculously prosperous companies such as Sony and Mitsubishi. Wrong. All too often, students know only about these seemingly exotic qualities and their studies in global history or world civilization courses simply reinforce them. Sometimes, even anthropologically organized texts echo these simplistic images when chapters focus on topics such as cultural values, family organization, economics, government, communication, and the arts. Unless Japan is one of the separate case studies in such a text, Japanese customs, values, arts, and institutions are presented as isolated examples of cultural variation rather than as integral elements of a total Japanese cultural system. The danger is that instead of giving students the tools and knowledge for understanding cultural differences, these images simply underscore the vision that the Japanese are different, strange, and undecipherable. Rarely do the textbooks consider the similarities between Japan and the U.S. What then should a text have in it to correct such skewed visions of Japan?

This Teacher's Corner, the second in a series of guides to textbook selection, suggests basic general points anthropologists would encourage you to consider as you evaluate textbooks that include Japan. (For the first guide to Global History/World Civilization texts, see Anthro Notes, Vol. 12, No. 1, Winter 1990, pp. 7-8). In this second guide we draw examples from widely used texts that include Japan such as:

- 1) *Global Insights* by James N. Hantual et al. (Columbus, Ohio: Merrill Publishing Co., 1988);
- 2) *A Global History* by Leften S. Stavrianos et al. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1979);
- 3) *World Cultures* by Claren L. Ver Steeg. (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1977); and
- 4) *World Geography Today* by R. J. Sager, D. M. Helgren and S. Israel (Austin: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1989).



### General Considerations

At a minimum, a cultural history or world civilization text should discuss environment, cultural values, history, and language. Ideally the text should analyze how these elements interact and how they affect politics, work, family life, the role of women, and the business world. It is important to "hear" Japanese speak from primary or secondary sources, either in narratives of their experiences and perspectives or in profiles of individual Japanese. *Global Insights* provides both the minimum and the ideal. In contrast, *World Cultures* does not have a separate section on Japan to show integration; hence the reader has a disjointed or skewed perspective and comes to know only about department stores, flower arrangements, the art of gardens, Haiku poetry, marriage partners, music, and social values.

Some texts, such as *A Global History*, focus primarily on China and consider Japan only in relationship to the history of China or the U.S. Granted it is impossible to cover every area of the world so that any teacher has to select the key countries for the course. *World Geography Today* is not a history or world cultures text but exemplifies a format in which many secondary students are introduced to other cultures and regions. Although this book

does have a separate chapter on Japan and Korea, as a geography text it focuses on the physical environment and its effect on agricultural and industrial production and settlement pattern. History and "way of life" are covered but these are not related to predominant cultural values, religions, ideologies, or language.

### 1. Environment

It is essential that any textbook point out the size; the mountains, including 190 volcanoes; the chain of islands; the frequency of earthquakes; the monsoons; and the absence of raw materials. Past and present cultural responses to crowding, dependence on foreign raw materials (especially oil and lumber) and frequent and unpredictable natural disasters should also be discussed.

### 2. Cultural Values

Does the text describe Shintoism and Buddhism, the two predominant religions in Japan, and explain that people often practice both? Shinto rituals honor ancestors and the forces of nature leading to reverence for the natural world, love of simplicity, and concern for cleanliness and good manners. Buddhism influenced the arts, and most Japanese today use Buddhist rituals in funerals and memorial rites for the dead. Both religions are used to affirm family ties and provide a sense of continuity with the past (p. 288, *Cultural Insights*).

What often confuses Americans and leads to cultural misunderstanding is a Japanese value system that emphasizes conformity rather than individualism, social obligations, saving face rather than resolution through open confrontation, ranking, the use of etiquette to reduce social tension, and greeting behavior including bowing. These values do not exist in a vacuum but evolved from historical forces and are best understood in the context of a highly crowded, compact country where 70% of the land is mountainous, only 7% is arable, and the archipelago offers no room for expansion.

The text should also discuss the Japanese work ethic and the intense studying in high school, often referred to as "examination hell." Why such pressure? In part, a high score on the examination at the end of high school not only determines where a person goes to college but where that person will work for the rest of his life. Different businesses have strong ties to particular universities--the source of their work force. Loyalty to and ties between institutions play a greater role than in the U.S. where such practices might be seen as unfairness or favoritism. As a result, college is often a far more relaxed time than high school.

Finally, the text should include Japanese attitudes toward nature. How are they different from those of the West, and why? Differences in cultural values are reflected in studies carried out by American and Japanese anthropologists, respectively. Americans who studied the Ituri Forest pygmies and Kalahari bushmen emphasized how few possessions people had, and how they shared both possessions and food freely among themselves. Japanese anthropologists, on the other hand, were struck by the hunter-gatherers' freedom of movement in a relatively unbounded space.

### 3. History

Does the text explain the major trends in historical change, noting the periods of isolationism and the minimal role of immigration or conquest during the last 2000 years? Although not anthropological per se, it seems important to analyze the Japanese drift to war during World War II. Is a Japanese perspective offered or only a U.S.? Are traditional Japanese values discussed such as physical courage and strict adherence to authority in order to show their role in leading Japan into the War. How did MacArthur's postwar changes alter the country?

Are the differences between urban and rural life shown? Is the relationship between the citizen and the government explored? Business and government traditionally and even today have had strong ties to each other, and local and national governments engage in many



practices Americans would find oppressive or unconstitutional.

If teachers are exploring comparative economic and political structures, they need to be aware of the problems when using such words as feudalism and imperialism. As Umesao Tadao states, "When we use the term "feudal system" in Japanese, we express it using the Chinese characters for feudalism. However, in Marxian terminology, the entire pre-modern age is referred to as 'feudalistic'. In present-day China, therefore, 'feudalistic' is applied to both Chinese and world history to mean 'pre-modern'. But the substance of the feudal system in Chinese and Japanese history is completely different.

Similarly, Europeans who came to Japan during the Meiji period first described the Tokugawa Shogunate as a feudal system. They based this on their own interpretation of its similarities with the feudal period in Europe." (SES 25:8). Major differences existed, however.

Since many Americans are distressed with the current economic competition with Japan, it is important that a text explain how Japanese corporations are different. Firms were not created historically in the same way as were Western companies. Western history and theory often do not apply. "Seen alone, Japanese enterprises are smaller than their Western counterparts, and on the whole, they are more specialized in form and function; seen as parts of a wider association of related firms, Japanese companies are often formidable building blocks of macro-organizational diversity and integration." (SES 26:123)

The Japanese economic development should not be characterized as a "miracle." As Harumi Befu from Stanford University notes, "Westerners have regarded their own economic development as being normal.... Deviations from the Western patterns are just that: deviations from the norm and from the normative. True to the nineteenth century unilinear evolutionism, the West still claims achievement of the pinnacle of economic success, which non-Western nationals are supposedly following and trying to achieve.... Enter Japan, which

performs better than the teacher that the West is supposed to be.... The Westerner's reaction is that this cannot be, and is therefore a miracle.... Also, to call the Japanese case a 'miracle' simply reinforces the notion . . . that Japan is unique. It does not help us understand Japan as a normal, natural phenomenon..." (SES 26:202).

#### 4. Language

Contrasts between English and Japanese can provide other insights into cultural differences. How do languages differ visually and in the direction in which they are read? Even though the Japanese once borrowed the Chinese system of writing, the Japanese language now has little in common with Chinese. Japanese uses picture words called kanji and symbols expressing different sounds called kanaa. Japanese incorporates a complex ranking system so that a speaker must consider whether the person addressed is a male or female, is older or younger, or has a higher status. The rank of the speaker will affect the endings of words as well as the actual vocabulary. For example, more than a dozen pronouns can be translated as "I". Women are ranked generally lower than men in the language.

Students should also appreciate why translation is difficult. For example, "hai" is usually translated as "yes." It means, however, yes I understand you, not yes I agree with you or yes I will do that. For Americans, conducting business discussions with Japanese and attempting to reach agreements, those distinctions are critical. Hurt feelings, a sense of betrayal, labels of "tricky, devious," and lack of trust all can grow simply from misunderstanding the meaning of the word yes.

#### Conclusion

What is important, then, in a textbook is that students see the interaction among environment, history, cultural values, and language. If these areas are covered in some detail, students then will have the background to explore in a more in-depth way how those four qualities affect politics, work, family life, the role of women, and the business world. They will then see why and how Japanese culture has certain

characteristics that affect many areas of Japanese life. Ideally, students who have an initial appreciation of Japanese differences and similarities within an integrated cultural system will be able to ask questions leading to a better understanding of Japan --whether they are reading newspaper articles on Japan, working in a Japanese-owned company, negotiating with Japanese officials, seeing Japanese portrayed in movies, or simply working with and entertaining Japanese colleagues and friends.

JoAnne Lanouette  
Alison Brooks

#### Additional References:

Norbeck, Edward. *Changing Japan*. (Case Studies in Cultural Anthropology). Holt, Rinehart, and Winston. (A standard anthropological resource)

*Senri Ethnological Studies* (SES). Japanese Civilization in the Modern World. National Museum of Ethnology. No. 25 Administrative Organizations, 1989; and No. 26 Economic Institutions, 1989. Senri Expo Park, Suita, Osaka, 565 Japan. (Reports from international symposia offering a Japanese perspective)

## WANTED! TEACHING RESOURCES

The AAA Task Force on Teaching Anthropology is working toward producing four resource and activity guides for teaching anthropology at the elementary and upper grade levels. The objective is to help teachers incorporate cultural and physical anthropology and archaeology into their teaching.

To organize this large amount of material, the committee has established a preliminary outline of subject categories widely used by school systems. These subject categories for the elementary grades are: families and communities; U.S. Studies (Native Americans, ethnic diversity, immigrants, and African-Americans); human-environment interaction; human origins; ancient civilizations (Egypt, Mesopotamia, Ancient Kingdoms of Black Africa, China, Greece, Rome, South America); and peoples of the world (peoples of Africa, East and Southeast Asia, the Near East and India, Europe, South America).

The subject categories for secondary and undergraduate levels include: social studies (world geographic areas); social sciences (anthropology, economics, geography, American and world history, psychology,



sociology); humanities (literature, art, languages and communication, world religions, philosophy); science and mathematics.

One volume for each level will focus on resources (books, films, curricula aids, games) and the other on activities. These volumes will be issued by the American Anthropological Association for a nominal fee to cover the cost of publication.

This is a large task and we need your help. We are asking for your recommendations of anthropology related books, films, curriculum materials and teaching activities that can be used to teach the subjects described above. Please send your best recommendations by July 2 to: Ann Kaupp, Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560.

## BOOK REVIEW

**GENDER AND ANTHROPOLOGY: CRITICAL REVIEWS FOR RESEARCH AND TEACHING**, edited by Sandra Morgan, American Anthropological Association, Washington, D.C. 1989. To obtain a copy, write to: AAA, 1703 New Hampshire Ave, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. The cost is \$15 for AAA members and \$20 for non-members.

This new volume culminates a three-year project designed to bring the last two decades' of anthropological research on women and gender to the teaching of anthropology (see "New Gender Perspectives in Anthropology," *AnthroNotes*, vol. 11, #3, Fall 1989). It is a gold mine of ideas, resources, practical teaching strategies, and activities for the classroom.

The book opens with a solid introductory essay by Sandra Morgan outlining the impact of feminist anthropology on the entire field of anthropology during the past two decades. Morgan traces much of the change to publications of the 1970's that heralded "a new era...as women became central to the research and theoretical agendas of both younger and more established scholars" (p.4). Eighteen chapters follow focusing on eight subfields or topics and ten culture regions. Each chapter contains a short conceptual essay laying out the basic themes, debates, and recent research in the subfield or topic under consideration; a listing of bibliographic and other resources such as films; and two curricular suggestions.

The book is very comprehensive. Topics include Early Hominid Evolution; Primates; Archaeology; Women in Biosocial Perspective; Public Policy in the US; Women, Technology, and Development; Gender and Language; and Sex, Sexuality, and Gender. Culture areas include the United States, modern China, Southeast Asia, Hindu Society, the Middle East, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, English-speaking Caribbean, American Indian Women, and Aboriginal Australia.

In most cases, the curricular suggestions are presented as "teaching activities," and provide a highly unusual approach and rich resource for the college or secondary school

teacher. Examples include "Images of Women and Men in Prehistory," "Material Expressions of Gender in the United States: A Case Study in Ethnoarchaeology," and "Manly Hearts and Changing Ones: Female Gender Variance in American Indian Societies." Together, these activities create a model "student-centered" approach to teaching anthropology. They provide ways to incorporate the new scholarship on women and gender and offer innovative and exciting classroom activities.

The practical utility of this Guide can be illustrated best by describing for our readers one of the special topic sections. The first chapter by Adrienne L. Zihlman from the University of California, Santa Cruz is titled "Woman the Gatherer: The Role of Women in Early Hominid Evolution." Zihlman begins by stating that the "purpose of this module is to provide guidance for incorporating women and their activities into discussions of hominid evolution and early hominid life" (p.21). The author focuses on the early stage of human evolution, two to four million years ago, and explains that several kinds of information are relevant: time, fossil record, living species, and the evolutionary process. She then summarizes information derived from the fossil record, primate behavior, and gatherer-hunters, information that can delineate women's reproductive, economic, and social activities and contributions to human evolution. She concludes "women made and used tools to obtain food for themselves, as well as to sustain their young after weaning; walked long distances; and carried food and infants bipedally on the African savannas. It is also reasonable to conclude that hunting did not emerge at the earliest stage of human evolution. Rather, hunting probably developed much later in human history and derived from the technological and social base in gathering" (p.31). Altogether, her argument supports her conclusion that "a balanced understanding of human evolution should incorporate women as well as men, children as well as adults into the picture and include the range of activities throughout the life cycle on which natural selection acts, rather than a narrower focus on one of them."

Following this essay is both a bibliography and an annotated bibliography of sources that may be assigned to students or used by instructors to focus discussion or prepare lectures on some aspect of the role of women in evolution. Zihlman's two curricular suggestions include one on Gender and Tools and another on Images of Women and Men in Prehistory. The objective of the first activity is to "examine female and male differences in tool use and associated activities among chimpanzees and gathering-hunting peoples in order to help students think about possible early hominid technology and activities associated with women" (p.37). Films and readings as well as three separate sets of discussion questions are used to focus students' attention on tool use among chimpanzees, contemporary gathering-hunting peoples, and early hominids of 2-4 million years ago.

The second activity, images of men and women in prehistory, has as its objective to "raise the awareness of how women have been depicted in evolutionary reconstructions, to question the assumptions underlying these depictions, and to focus on or create more positive images of women in prehistory. The author suggests many sources such as Time-Life Books or National Geographic Magazine articles and many films as well. (Most of the materials listed can also be found in the "Introductory Bibliography to Human Evolution" available from the Office of Public Information, Department of Anthropology, National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560.) Zihlman then poses very specific questions for students to ask while examining visual representations of early humans. Questions include:

1. Are women or female figures present? Assuming female figures are present, are the figures identified as women? If so, how?
2. Location: Where are the women placed? Foreground? Background? What does this suggest about their position in the group? Contrast this to where the men placed are in the illustration.

3. Body posture: Are women pictured standing, sitting, moving? How about the men?

4. Activities: In what kinds of activities are the women engaged? Are they holding or using tools? What activities are men doing? Is the range of activities for men greater than for women?



5. Demeanor: Where are the women looking (out, down)? Do they appear to be afraid? timid? in charge? Are women depicted burdened with children? as leaders? dependent? marginal? How are men depicted?

6. Overall, what kind of impression is conveyed about early hominid society? Is it women or men who are doing the work, sharing food, caretaking, making or using implements?

7. Is a sexual division of labor implied? How do these characterizations fit with what you have learned in this course?

8. How might reconstructions of the past reflect our own cultural stereotypes of what are proper roles for men and women?

9. With knowledge of nonhuman primates and gatherer-hunters, what kind of picture might you construct of early hominid life?

(continued on p.15)

## TEACHER'S CONFERENCE

The Northeast Regional Conference on Social Studies (a.k.a. NERCE) meets annually in Boston in March. This conference is organized by the social studies councils in the six New England states, New York and New Jersey. It is one of the most active affiliates of the National Council for Social Studies. It is well attended and offers a diversity of activities and resources to teachers and administrators. This year's pre-conference workshop was given by the Massachusetts Global Alliance. As well as having a traditional publishers' hall, the conference included a media festival, computer lab, museum marketplace, and, for the first time, complimentary exhibit space for fifteen non-profit organizations such as Amnesty International, Earthwatch, and Cultural Survival.

As participants in the American Anthropological Association's Task Force on Anthropology in the Schools, John Herzog (Northeastern University) and Judith Nierenberg (Documentary Educational Resources) organized a session to inform teachers about the task force and to elicit comments, requests, and any other information to report back to the task force. Presentations were given by Herzog and Nierenberg and four Massachusetts teachers. Teachers included Mary Anne Wolff, North Reading High School, who received an NSF grant on teaching anthropology at the pre-collegiate level and wrote her dissertation on the results; Tom Brow, department chair, Melrose Junior High School, teacher of world cultural courses; Elaine Engleberg and Sal Lopez, Lexington High School, who both teach anthropology but with very different approaches. Sal is a returned Peace Corps volunteer who has very direct and personal experiences of the "marginal native," whereas Elaine teaches a more theoretical course with emphasis on art and psychology. The teachers and administrators who came to the session were from both public and independent schools and many have taught anthropology courses for years.

Several issues were raised that are important for the task force to hear. Anthropology has long been taught in the schools and with

many different approaches. The range is from full-year courses that are filled every year to global studies courses for non-college bound students. Many middle schools incorporate cultural anthropology into geography courses, which are now very popular. Anthropology is certainly alive in the schools, but it may not be particularly well. Because of the enormous cut-backs in school funding, courses that do not fill are dropped. In addition, administrators are reluctant to allow a teacher to develop a course for several reasons: if the course is dropped, that teacher is likely to be ruffed, or if a teacher develops a course over the years and the school invests in materials and then the teacher leaves, there is not necessarily a teacher prepared to take over the course.

Another issue raised was academic credibility. One teacher suggested an Advanced Placement course in anthropology as a bone fide course that could be as competitive on college applications as European history or chemistry. An alternate possibility is to have anthropology (particularly physical anthropology and archaeology) fill a science as well as a social studies requirement. Most teachers justifiably resent any implication that students take anthropology for an easy grade.

On a final note, teachers are tremendously resourceful in developing new materials and in finding speakers and programs in their communities to enhance their classes. Teachers utilize a variety of materials, including many of the readings assigned in introductory courses at the collegiate level, and were pleased to receive the additional resource materials provided by the participants. Teachers are highly tuned to their students' needs and capabilities and do not need collegiate academics shaping courses for them. Preferably, they need advocates for what already exists in many schools.

Judith Nierenberg  
Documentary Educational Resources

("Archaeology" continued from p.4)

materially "worse off" in the first years of freedom than they were as slaves. Structural remains from the cabins of freed men and women indicated that the chimney was constructed of reused brick, haphazardly built on a bed of oyster shell. Tools were used until they were completely worn, and occupants of the site subsisted almost entirely upon wild game--turtle, fish, and small mammals. A recent excavation of another refugee camp of ex-slaves should provide additional information of the immediate material effects of emancipation.

### The Diet and Health of Slaves and Free Blacks

Archaeological studies of nutrition are particularly important to discussions of slave nutrition, a realm of slave life that has been greatly debated by students of slavery. One school of thought suggests that slave diet was nutritious and that caloric intake often exceeded modern recommended levels of chief nutrients. The more accepted view is that slave diet was inadequate and malnutrition was a frequent problem reflected in high child mortality and in the prevalence of diseases resulting from nutritional deficiencies. The analysis of food remains can contribute to this discussion by documenting the kinds of foods slaves consumed. Studies conducted by zooarchaeologists (archaeologists who analyze food bone) indicate that slaves supplemented their mundane plantation rations of cornmeal and fatback with small mammals they hunted and fish they collected in nets. Several studies of faunal remains collected from sites in the southeastern United States suggest that food collection activities of slaves accounted for 35 to 40 percent of the meat in slave diet.

Analyses of human remains provide a wide range of information on nutrition, pathologies, and occupational stresses. One of the largest skeletal samples of African Americans was unearthed from an abandoned cemetery of Philadelphia's First African Baptist Church (FABC), which served as a burial ground for free African Americans between 1823 and 1843. More than 140 adult and children skeletons were

analyzed and reburied. Analyses revealed that the quality of life and the health status of free black Philadelphians and various slave populations were similar. These conditions were particularly evident in the analysis of dental enamel undertaken by Michael Blakey, a physical anthropologist at Howard University. Blakey introduced a new method that gives a record of fetal and childhood health by measuring defects in the dental enamel of adult skeletons. Results show that their lives were particularly harsh, especially as fetuses (linked to maternal health) and as children. This finding came as a surprise to Blakey who thought that free African American children would have had somewhat better health than did slave children.

Occupational stress in the FABC population was particularly evident among females, many of whom were laundresses. The stress of laundering is evident in their well-developed triceps and pectoral muscles and fingers. One individual displayed evidence of cervical breakdown, perhaps from carrying the laundry as a head load, and of bending stress on lower vertebrae. Tuberculosis, iron deficiency anemia, arthritis, and cholera are among the diseases the cemetery population suffered.

The healing paraphernalia uncovered from the Jordan Plantation in Texas suggest the kinds of folk medicine sought by African Americans, but excavations of slave cabins and plantation infirmaries give indications of the kinds of medications slave owners administered to the slaves. Excavations of slave cabins along the Georgia coast indicate that slaves regularly consumed patent medicines with high alcoholic contents and brewed alcoholic beverages. While some of this consumption was perhaps recreational in nature, the plantation records of a slave site I excavated indicated that patent medicines and homemade rum regularly were dispensed to the slaves as a preventative for rheumatic diseases. Future excavations of plantation infirmaries will possibly turn up medical instruments and other objects used to treat slaves.

From this brief overview of African American archaeology, it should be apparent that this research presents new and

provocative information on the lives of African Americans. Critics of historical archaeology often claim that all this information is in the written record; I challenge them to find it.

**Suggested Readings**

Kelso, William. "Mulberry Row: Slave Life at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello." *Archaeology* 39:5 (1986).

Orser, Charles E, Jr. "Artifacts, Documents, and Memories of the Black Tenant Farmer." *Archaeology* 38:4 (1985).

Parrington, Michael and Daniel G. Roberts. "The First African Baptist Church Cemetery." *Archaeology* 37:6 (1984).

Singleton, Theresa. "Breaking New Ground." *Southern Exposure* 16:2 (1988).

\_\_\_\_\_, editor. *The Archaeology of Slavery and Plantation Life*. Orlando, FL: Academic Press, 1985.

A comprehensive bibliography on African American Archaeology is in preparation and will be available from the Society of Historical Archaeology, Spring 1991. Write: Society for Historical Archaeology, P. O. Box 231033, Pleasant Hill, CA 94512.

Theresa A. Singleton  
 Department of Anthropology  
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**EDUCATION POSITION**

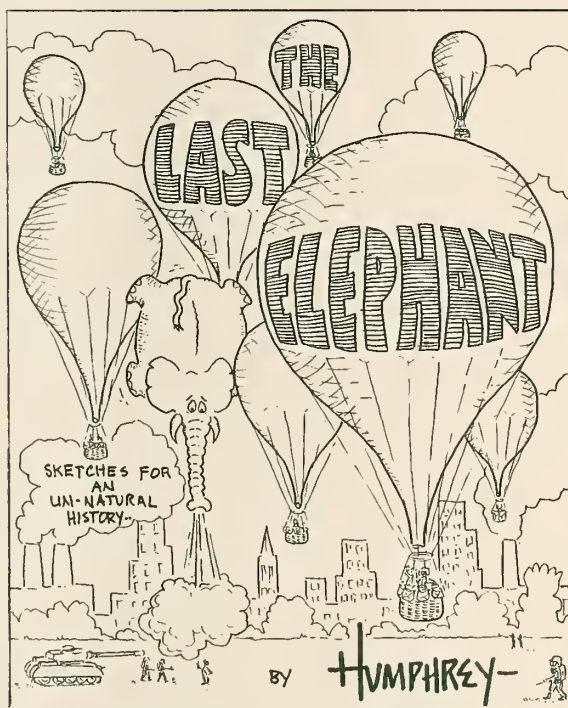
The Center for American Archeology, an internationally respected research and educational institution, seeks a creative individual to fill a teaching and administrative position in the Education Program. Administrative responsibilities include student recruitment, public relations, and marketing. Teaching responsibilities include outdoor education in human interaction with the environment. Teaching certification and experience in middle school and/or high school education

("Gender" continued from p.12)

The Gender Project, and its resulting book, is a superb example of what commitment, hard work, and solid research ability can produce. The American Anthropological Association, the Advisory Board for the Gender and Anthropology Project, The Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education (FIPSE), and Sandra Morgan are all to be commended for this worthy and helpful book. The results are now available, and the *Anthro.Notes* editors highly recommend that our readers obtain a copy for their own use and teaching.

Ruth O. Selig

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Anthro.Notes' cartoonist Bob Humphrey has just finished *The Last Elephant*, a cartoon book that will be published this fall by Friends of the National Zoo. For ordering information, write to: Susan Lumpkin, Friends of the National Zoo Publications, National Zoo, Washington, D.C. 20008.

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