

Reviews

Anne-Marie Cantwell and Diana diZerega Wall, *Unearthing Gotham: The Archaeology of New York City*. Yale University Press New Haven and London, 2001; x + 373 pp.; hardback; ISBN 0-300-08415-3.

This is an enthralling work, largely for the general US reader, but with sufficient information to be used as an undergraduate textbook. Of the 17 chapters five deal with the 'deeper past' and nine with the 'recent past', i.e. the period after European settlement. The archaeology of the twentieth century is noticeably absent, as usual. The material of most interest to ASHA members will probably be the nineteenth-century chapters (12 to 15), which draw upon the authors' own research. But there is something for everybody: Indigenous ceremonial sites, clay pipes, teacups, burials, privies, button-making, garden plots, wharf-construction, even a seventeenth-century Dutch ship.

The authors have a pleasant style, similar to that used in, say, the *National Geographic*, and they intersperse little biographies of the archaeologists whose work they are discussing. So we learn that Diana Wall, along with Nan Rothschild, ran the first professional excavation in New York City, the Stadt Huys Block, in 1979. Anne-Marie Cantwell is more mysterious, being mentioned only once in the book, but she is obviously as good a synthesiser as her co-author.

Information about the 'deeper past', i.e. the Paleoindian phases, is derived largely from the work of early, non-professional, archaeologists, digging at a time when New York was still undeveloped. Such people are usually dismissed as 'antiquarian' or amateur. They were both those things and frequently destructive too, but our authors kindly describe them as 'avocational'. It is thanks to the avocationalists that we know anything at all about the early human presence along the eastern coast and rivers from 11 000 BP.

We are better informed about the 'Woodland' phases (2700–400 BP), studied more professionally and within a broader academic context. Cantwell and Wall plump for a limited form of sedentism-cum-horticulture, which was catastrophically affected by the European presence. The period of actual coexistence between Indigenous and colonial is treated in great detail (ch. 8) and I was fascinated by the triangular trade in *wampum*, the tubular shell beads which the Dutch and English bought or extorted from the coastal people to use as currency for the purchase of furs from the inland. Within decades, *wampum* was being manufactured by white women from imported Caribbean shell, thus removing the coastal peoples' sole remaining economic asset.

This is very much a social history, with considerable emphasis being laid on the daily lives of the various groups under consideration. Though the authors don't spell this out, many aspects of New York are common to all colonial societies, from Peru to Perth: the mixture of peoples, the adapta-

tion to and of the environment, the attempts to retain elements of traditional life, the near-extinction of the Indigenous people and their tenacious survival. One additional element in the Americas is the presence of enslaved Africans, almost from the start of European colonisation. At first the enslaved dwelt alongside their owners in the place of work, but in the nineteenth century they moved to separate areas, as did most other workers, accentuating the contraction of the domestic circle from extended to near-nuclear family. Although emancipation occurred in 1827, the 'Jim Crow' laws in the later nineteenth century imposed a *de facto* apartheid, both economic and geographic.

The high point of this book, and fittingly its final chapter, is an account of the rediscovery and excavation of the eighteenth-century 'Negro Burial Ground' in 1991–1992. At least 400 bodies were uncovered and an estimated 200 more left undisturbed. As the authors point out, everything about this excavation illustrates both the achievements and the problems of archaeology. Since the book was published new discoveries have come to light, in the former 'Commons' area, which extends south of the Burial Ground into the Five Points, New York's equivalent of Sydney's The Rocks.

The area has been found to contain many burials, some of which may be those of Africans. Others may be those of the indigent, the prisoners of war or the criminals who died in the various institutions built on the site prior to the 'Tweed' County Courthouse of the 1860s. These burials have been exposed and resealed without any further analysis, causing much dismay among the city's archaeologists and general community (see *Archaeology* 55.4, July–August 2002 and its website www.archaeology.org).

Unearthing Gotham is of great value in organising and bringing out the results of excavation reports, which are mostly available only from Government repositories. It is interesting, lucid and conscientious. It is at pains to situate the archaeology of New York within current theory and practice. The technical descriptions are superbly clear and the whole thing is a good serious read—a shade too serious perhaps, the only approximation to levity being in its title. The only fault I have with it is that it is somewhat parochial. I have learned nothing about how New York compares with, say, Boston, or Baltimore, let alone Cape Town or Melbourne. The bibliography is almost 100% US-oriented—though it is good to see Alan Mayne cited for his work on 'slums'. For readers of this *Journal* that is not a problem and certainly this is a book one can recommend to any practitioner, teacher or student of historical archaeology.

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Nigel Prickett, *The archaeology of New Zealand shore whaling*. New Zealand Department of Conservation, Wellington, 2002; available from DOC Science Publications, PO Box 10420, Wellington NZ, www.doc.govt.nz; 151 pp.; ISBN 0 478 22208 4.

Shore whaling in Australia and New Zealand has a significant shared heritage, with European and indigenous individuals, ships and commercial operations appearing repeatedly in both places. The strength of the connection has often been

remarked upon. Mark Staniforth and Susan Lawrence expanded their proposed research project on the archaeology of whaling in Australia to include New Zealand as its omission would have made little sense. It is therefore pleasing to welcome this thorough, well researched and presented volume to the growing corpus of data on Australasian whaling.

Nigel Prickett has prepared what can be considered a complete survey of New Zealand's historic shore-based whaling stations. The bulk of the report is an inventory of the known

archaeological resource. Thirteen regions are identified and the sites that are known within each, whether from historical information or modern archaeology, is enumerated and described. Prickett was able to find or investigate 87 stations and sites, with a further 25 known but unable to be confirmed.

The monograph opens with a short but valuable overview of the industry's history covering both traditional shore-based whaling and twentieth century mechanised whaling. The first shore whaler may have been operating by 1827, although initially just for whalebone. The industry rapidly expanded, being driven particularly by Australian commercial interests to supplement their other operations. The impact of hunting on the breeding stocks mirrored that occurring elsewhere, with a catastrophic collapse in whale numbers during the 1840s. This resulted in almost all of the whaling stations closing by 1850. As at the Davidson whaling station in Twofold Bay, New South Wales, which only survived because whaling became an opportunistic activity, some Maori were able to sustain occasional hunts as part of their farming and other activities. Some minor shore whaling was also carried out in other locations last century. Twentieth-century factory whaling is also discussed, but the report excludes temporary trying-out operations such as that practised by ship-based bay whalers. Unfortunately it also excludes the Maori farmer-whalers mentioned above.

As elsewhere the presence of shore whaling provided a mixed blessing for local indigenous communities, providing opportunities for participation in European economic systems that were not inherently race-based, as all whalers were entitled to lays or set shares of the value of their catch. The value of labour in the shore stations and whaling ships was high. Whaling's impact on local communities included marriages between whalers and Maori, employment, the development of a cash economy, but also alcohol and disruption of traditional power structures. Prickett's evaluation is that the overall impact was positive, given that European settlement in New

Zealand was happening on a large and relentless scale.

The inventory of sites includes information on the location, a description of the setting and of any archaeological evidence, as well as any known history. The information available is extremely variable for all the usual reasons of historical survival and location in often active shore locations. Illustrations are abundant, including contemporary views of the stations in operation where available. There are few site plans, which would have been useful for comparison. As expected, lots and lots of try-pot shots.

The funding from the New Zealand Department of Conservation included the requirement to better understand the archaeological resource so that it could be managed. Thirteen are classed as 'outstanding' and a further fifteen as 'good', while nineteen at least have been destroyed. My impression is that a wide range of sites appears to be reasonably well preserved. Based on the comprehensive inventories that are now available from the Australian states, the archaeological resource is extensive and significant. The same questions that have proven to be fruitful for the examination of shore whaling in Australia can be applied to the New Zealand sites, as well as additional insights on relations with the Maori as an indigenous people with a very differently structured society.

I would recommend that not only people interested in the historical archaeology of whaling read this book. It is well-written and very readable as an exercise in archaeological survey for the purposes of making management decisions, and for exploring issues in the economic development of Australia and New Zealand.

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Maurice Evans, *Principles of Environmental and Heritage Law*. Prospect Media, St. Leonards NSW Australia, 2000; 407 pp.; paperback; ISBN 1-86316-162-7.

Australian scholars of heritage conservation and environmental law have not engaged in much recent, cross-disciplinary analysis of the legal framework which underpins heritage conservation in Australia. Texts such as *Law and the Cultural Heritage* by Lyndel Prott and P. J. O'Keefe, while important, are now quite out of date (Volume 1 published 1984, Volume 3 published 1986; and the projected remaining three volumes have never been published). Much of the more recent law-heritage scholarship has looked at issues such as World Heritage management in Australia (e.g. work by Professor Ben Boer throughout the 1990s). Maurice Evans's *Principles of Environmental and Heritage Law*, based on his SJD thesis at the University of Sydney, represents the most extensive examination of the interface between law and heritage management in Australia since Prott & O'Keefe's mammoth (and sadly, unfinished) series.

Evans has chosen to re-examine the law-heritage relationship from the point of view of ecologically sustainable development (ESD) principles which have become well established in Commonwealth, State and Territory legislation, as well as internationally, over the last ten years. ESD principles can be summarised briefly as:

– the precautionary principle (lack of scientific certainty is not a basis for inaction);

- intergenerational equity (the present generation should maintain environmental quality for future generations);
- conservation of biodiversity; and,
- improved valuation and pricing of environmental resources (polluter/user-pays approach).

Evans traces the development of these principles through their nascence in international agreements and treaties, to their insertion and practical implementation in Commonwealth and State legislation in Australia. He then uses that analysis to examine the usefulness of the ESD framework for conserving heritage, in all its forms—natural, indigenous and non-indigenous—in the Australian context, as well as reviewing the effectiveness, from a legal point of view, of existing heritage policies such as the Burra Charter.

Evans's text also serves as a useful reminder, or primer, to the fact that the practical work of heritage management—be it archaeology, architecture, 'cultural conservation', or natural heritage conservation—has been supported and underpinned by an intricate legal framework at both the national and international level. In the absence of the legislation that Evans discusses, heritage conservation would be a considerably different beast in Australia today. While some heritage managers may regard elements of the present legal framework as arbitrary or irrelevant to heritage conservation, Evans traces the evolution of the legal concepts which, over the latter half of the twentieth century, have allowed the development of a robust heritage industry in Australia.

Building on this analysis of the development of the principles underlying environmental and heritage conservation treaties and legislation, Evans attempts to identify common themes and integrate them into a coherent framework for environment and heritage management. He does this by positing the appropriateness of the ESD principles as the basis for future heritage management in Australia. He provides specific case studies of Commonwealth and NSW legislation and court cases. He examines how current heritage and environmental laws function in relation to these principles, how the courts have been interpreting them and how the current situation could be improved through the application of the ESD framework. He concludes the book with a detailed case study of the proposed World Heritage nomination for the Sydney Opera House, which did not proceed, largely due to the overlapping and inconsistent legal and management frameworks for the Opera House and Sydney Harbour generally. He argues that the application of the ESD principles in this instance may have provided a solid and consistent rationale for the management of the Opera House as a World Heritage area.

The application of the ESD principles in this way is a fairly new step for Australian heritage management where there is lingering belief that heritage is a part of 'the arts' rather than a part of 'the environment'. Evans, while a lawyer, comes from a background in architecture and town planning and is aware of the practical issues confronting heritage managers. He makes a compelling case that heritage should be seen as an environmental concern. The underlying thrust of his argument is that ESD can provide a valid legal framework to support heritage management in Australia, because it is already widely accepted and built into State, Territory and

Commonwealth law. Heritage legislation drafted now, or in the future, around ESD principles would allow heritage management to develop more effectively and more consistently across Australia.

The book is very thoroughly researched and referenced in great detail (indeed, sometimes too much detail). The writing style is likely to be rather dense for those readers outside the field of law, but this can be partly attributed to the author's desire to be comprehensive. The book is however well enough organised and indexed to allow a reader to be selective. Heritage managers who wish to understand the background to the development of Australian environmental and heritage law, or those interested in applying sustainability principles to their work, will benefit from this book.

Evans's conclusions—that heritage and environmental conservation must be underpinned by an ethic of stewardship—are not necessarily earth-shattering nor are they totally foreign to existing ideas about heritage conservation in Australia. What Evans's book demonstrates is that ESD can provide an effective and consistent legal framework for heritage conservation at the national and international levels, using broadly accepted and legally enforceable principles. The legal landscape remains an ever-changing one and it will be necessary to watch whether Evans's ideas are validated by future laws and future heritage managers.

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