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Down & Dirty: Archaeology of the South Carolina Lowcountry, by
M. Patrick Hendrix

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torians. This section concerns the role of ghosts and ancestor worship in Vietnamese culture. Although heavy with anthropological analysis, these two chapters may be useful for public historians working with Viet Kieu (Vietnamese diaspora) communities. At the very least, the discussion may serve as a tale of warning for outside experts who try to work with the complicated socio-cultural rituals, symbols, and structures of Southeast Asian communities. The fifth and sixth chapters explore how the categories of war heroes, ancestors, and ghosts failed to properly represent the identity of the victims of civilian massacres. Here the author notes how Confucian and Taoist concepts of a proper and just death challenge the horrific and senseless loss of life in Ha My and My Lai. The next two chapters discuss the various official and popular ways in which the state and villages mourned the deaths. Kwon makes clear that government attempts to erect memorials often clashed with local practices. All too often, the communities viewed the state-sponsored monuments as something imposed upon them. Finally, in the last full chapter, the author places the death memorials in the context of the “decomposition of the Cold War.” Here we see how the changing global political order further disturbed the process of memorializing as the village came into conflict with not just the nation-state but with transnational forces such as foreign governments, non-governmental organizations, and American and Korean veterans groups.

In the end, Kwon’s work may be most useful to the public historian as a cautionary tale. Although the details of the various cultural constructions of death in rural Vietnam may be too detailed for most readers, there is a crucial underlying statement. Arguing from the perspective of a cultural anthropologist, the author highlights the various traps of misunderstanding and contesting value systems that may arise from attempts to commemorate horrific war crimes. Perhaps it is inevitable that the competing interests of families, villages, political parties, nation-states, and other institutions of civil society will clash. What Kwon teaches us is that these clashes might be contained or at least ameliorated by a deeper understanding of the multiple and competing meanings of death and the needs of the various actors to find an appropriate method to grieve and remember. At the very least the public historian will gain some perspective on how to approach the task of memorializing tragic mass death.

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Down & Dirty: Archaeology of the South Carolina Lowcountry by M. PATRICK HENDRIX. Charleston: The History Press, 2006, 168 pp.; photographs, drawings, bibliography; paperbound, \$24.99.

The enthusiastic blurb on the back of *Down & Dirty* promises a “fast-paced romp through more than fifty thousand years” of South Carolina’s lowcountry past. In fact, the book is more of a riot than a romp. The author’s goal is to “offer a unique historical perspective of Charleston by looking at the area’s

archaeology” (p. 7). His target is the “widest possible audience . . . hope[ing] this work will be read by those who would not normally be interested in such a subject” (p. 9). I sincerely hope he is successful. Hendrix also notes that the book will annoy professional archaeologists, and in that regard, he certainly has been successful with this professional.

The book starts off well enough with a brief overview of lowcountry prehistory. The prehistory relies almost exclusively on archaeologically gathered information, and thus the chapter fits within the book’s topic. Since Hendrix’s target audiences are people who normally are not interested in archaeology, they probably will not notice that although the chapter reads well, it is reminiscent of cut-and-paste historic contexts typical of archaeological technical reports. From here the book loses focus. It can be best described as a series of vignettes about particular archaeological projects, but includes long, wandering historical passages without reference to archaeology, and with occasional romps beyond the Charleston region. It is this chaotic lack of balance that becomes characteristic, and the last chapter fails to mention archaeology at all.

The best example of this lack of balance is the third chapter, “The Charleston Frontier and the African Potters of Christ Church Parish.” The reader is thus a bit startled by the lead paragraph that begins: “On the morning of September 28, 1066, nearly one thousand ships carrying some seven thousand armed men appeared off the coast of England” (55). “O.K.,” says the reader, “the author is going to make an astonishing connection between the Battle of Hastings and African [African American?] potters.” How does Hendrix connect Hastings to African potters? It seems one of William of Normandy’s followers was a man named Lynch who was given an estate in England. One hundred years later, one of the Lynch family became a mercenary and invaded Ireland. After that branch of the Lynch family lived in Ireland for 500 years, one of them came to Charleston and bought some land that became Lynch plantation. Archaeologists excavated Lynch plantation and found colono-ware, a ceramic type archaeologists believe was developed by the West African slaves in early America. Now that’s global connection!

The following chapter looks at Schieveling Plantation, which began as a walled settlement built in the early eighteenth century. In 1785, the land was bought by Ralph Izard, who developed Schieveling Plantation. But before we read about Schieveling, we are romping across South Carolina during the American Revolution. Ten pages later we finally get back to Schieveling Plantation after the war, but there is not much more to say, except that Izard apparently spent most of his time in his Charleston home and not at Schieveling. Yet another plantation is examined in the next chapter, but by now a savvy reader is beginning to wonder if all archaeology can do is make guesses about what a building looked like from its remains, and why certain ceramic types did or did not show up on site. For professionals, it’s a bit unnerving to discover that’s about all the public thinks we can contribute.

Once past the plantations, Hendrix writes a refreshingly tight chapter on the Confederate submarine H.L. *Hunley*. This chapter is what the rest of the

book should have been. The text does not wander, the illustrations fit the topic, and it's a well-written popular summary. If the author had followed this format, the book would have been a model of how to write popular archaeology. Alas, the book ends with a chapter on Morris Island, with no reference to archaeology.

While the chapters stray about, individual paragraphs, taken separately, are well written. The book is lavishly illustrated, but the illustrations, like the text, are randomly chosen. And that may be the key to what this book actually is—a coffee table book in text book size. The reader isn't supposed to read it from beginning to end. The book is supposed to sit on a coffee table, to be occasionally leafed through and admired by house guests who aren't paying particular attention to the text since the illustrations are beautiful.

Hendrix states that his book takes a journalistic approach. If he means that he wrote the text and an editor chose the headings (like a newspaper), then he is spot on. And that is where the problem ultimately lies—not with the writer, but with the editor. Whoever edited the book should have taken control, cut here and expanded there, and fact checked—all the while keeping a relentless focus on Charleston archaeology, or Lowcountry archaeology, or at least on archaeology.

Down & Dirty is a valiant effort to write archaeology for the public. It disappoints only because it lacks focus. Hendrix is absolutely correct that most professional archaeologists do not write for the public. The book is thus a warning to all professional archaeologists, academic historians and public historians. If we don't write for the public, someone else will, and the result will be *Down & Dirty*.

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Democracy Restored: A History of the Georgia State Capitol by TIMOTHY J. CRIMMINS and ANNE H. FARRISEE. Athens: University of Georgia Press in association with the Georgia Humanities Council, 2007; 200 pp.; cloth-bound, \$39.95.

From the laying of the cornerstone on September 2, 1885, to the present day, the Georgia State Capitol has been a hub of controversy, debate, and revolution. Timothy Crimmins and Anne Farrisee vividly recount its tumultuous history in a striking, fully illustrated book. They tell the story of a building alive with political machinations, social protest, and frequent transformation, using the Capitol as a means to understand them. Combined with the stunning photographs by award-winning photographer Diane Kirkland, Crimmins and Farrisee highlight many of the important events and decisions that took place within the statehouse.

As the authors recount the major episodes in the Capitol's history, they