

Historical Archaeology and Indigenous Collaboration: Discovering Histories that Have Futures
D. Rae Gould, Holly Herbster, Heather Law Pezzarossi, and Stephen A. Mrozowski
University Press of Florida, Gainesville, Florida 2020. 224pp., 26 Figs., 2 tables., bibliography,
about the authors, index. \$85.00 hardcover.

Gould et al.'s book offers a rich and humanistic story of Nipmuc continuance in New England since the 1600s told through the lives of particular, often named persons, emphasizing the ongoing significance of cultural landscapes and resilience of Indigenous futures in the face of colonial practices of dispossession, elimination, and (non)recognition. As the subtitle implies, the book builds on critiques of the "prehistory" concept to challenge settler colonial erasures of Indigenous presence and futurity through collaborative research conducted since the early 2000s on the Magunkaog, Boston/Burnee Homestead, and Cisco Homestead/Hassanamesit Reservation sites. Weaving together archaeological, written, and oral records, the book provides a glimpse into everyday life, adaptation, and social memory through Nipmuc cultural landscapes. While professional scholars may not find the conceptual content particularly new, the book offers an in-depth account of silenced regional histories in the heart of the American empire and gestures towards futurity as a major theoretical intervention for collaborative and decolonizing archaeologies.

The Introduction (Gould and Mrozowski) opens with three narrative vignettes about Nipmuc individuals associated with the above sites, placing the authors' commitment to a humanistic archaeology front and center. This chapter sets up the collaborative context of the project, a challenge to the 2004 federal decision denying recognition to the Nipmuc Tribe, and the overarching argument that Nipmuc identities and communities continue through adaptive strategies and persistent relationships with ancestral landscapes. Chapter 2 (Gould, Herbster, and Mrozowski) outlines a historical context of New England in the 1600s and 1700s, focusing on (Christian) Praying Towns and Metacom's (King Philip's) War. This chapter problematizes Eurocentric representations of Praying Towns that rely exclusively on written records and the

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confinement of Nipmuc people to island concentration camps during the war, a policy with a massive death toll.

Chapter 3 (Mrozowski) describes archaeological research at a sixteenth and seventeenth century Praying Town identified as Magunkaquoag. The author argues that the adoption of Christianity represents not “a break with older practices but... a continuation” (72), as indicated by a “butter pot” repurposed to Indigenous cooking methods, flintknapped gunflints, and many other examples. Challenging narratives that frame Metacom’s War as the end of Indigenous lifeways in New England, the town remained populated well into the 1700s. Chapter 4 (Herbster) investigates what the author calls “documentary archaeology” at Magunkaquoag, a term meant to foreground the power relations and interpretive labor inherent in archival research. Shedding light on the enduring Nipmuc presence at Magunkaquoag, this chapter pays special attention to contradictions in written accounts, such as between the missionary John Eliot’s descriptions of the town plan and those of a Mohawk raiding party and conflicting reports of the 1715 sale of the Praying Town’s land.

Chapter 5 (Pezzarossi and Mrozowski) turns to the eighteenth and nineteenth century Sarah Boston/Burnee Homestead site. This chapter investigates strategies of adaption and continuance through shifting economic livelihoods from service to farming and later basketmaking, heritage and deep memory through objects ranging from a repurposed bowl potentially dating to c. 3000 BP to Revolutionary War coat buttons, and participation in the larger multiethnic, multiracial, and multinational networks of New England. Ceramic assemblages—described as more similar to a tavern than contemporaneous households—are interpreted as evidence of hosting large Nipmuc community gatherings in the early 1800s: A

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historical moment for which the BIA claimed Nipmuc leadership was insufficiently documented.

Chapter 6 (Pezzarossi) adopts a more phenomenological approach emphasizing the Boston/Burnee family's movements through the larger landscape. Advocating a "dwelling" perspective, the author notes that focusing on isolated sites obscures the Nipmuc people's multifaceted relationships with land and travels through New England. The author devotes special attention to unpacking the silences embedded within written and archaeological sources while attending to how Nipmuc people navigated uneven relations of dispossession, indenture, and proletarianization.

Chapter 7 (Gould) investigates the Cisco Homestead site, which later became the Tribe's Hassanamisco Reservation. This chapter documents the Cisco women and related families' work protecting the homestead since the 1880s as the last parcel of Nipmuc land, animating tradition of activism that continued into the Red Power and contemporary eras. Like Chapter 5, the author directly critiques the 2004 federal recognition decision, which defined the site as a private allotment and not a reservation—an "either/or" mentality that obscures Nipmuc histories and strategies of continuance. The concluding chapter (Gould and Mrozowski) draws out the book's themes of collaboration, the politics of the past, memory and cultural landscapes, identity and authenticity, resilience and social transformation, and the role of Nipmuc women.

I did find myself wishing the book allocated the same extensive treatment to what was learned through collaborative and oral history research as was given to the archaeological and documentary records, which received whole chapters. Students and professionals alike would benefit from reading this book in conversation with scholarship on gender in Native North America, critiques of federal recognition and liberal settler governance (including Gould's other

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writings), and the Northeast Farmers of Color Land Trust's (an organization with significant Nipmuc leadership) thinking on land "rematriation." However, given the book's accessibility to non-specialists, it is not unreasonable for such literatures to be left for other and perhaps future publications.

I assigned this book in a class on deep Native American histories and the politics of the past taught on Nipmuc land. The book contributed an in-depth collaborative and interpretive case study—demonstrating how to do archaeology right. Students particularly enjoyed the connection to living peoples. While the authors do draw on complex analytical frameworks, they usually explain these in clear, everyday language. As such the book is appropriate for lower and upper division—as well as graduate—courses. The detailed, empirical focus foregrounds interpretively rich artifacts, contexts, and patterns, making the book a powerful teaching tool.

I highly recommend this book for historical archaeology courses given the authors' sustained, empirical treatment of how archaeology and written documents can enrich and contradict one another, as well as classes on landscape, colonialism, social memory, and identity. I could not recommend the book enough for classes on Ancient North America, the Eastern Woodlands, and New England. The book was indispensable in my own classroom, offering an account that bridged the 1600s to the present through collaborative research providing rich information about gender relations, multifaceted Nipmuc identities, and power in the production of the past.

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