J. C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology

Mark P. Leone

The 2016 Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) J. C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology was presented to Mark P. Leone at the 49th Annual Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology in Washington, D.C., in January. It is difficult to imagine historical archaeology scholarship that ignores the half-millennium impression of capitalism, evades the ways power is embedded in the most quotidian things, or does not acknowledge the political weight of archaeological practice. These have all been fundamental threads of Mark's work for more than 35 years. Mark has been a ceaseless advocate for a theoretically rich, intellectually ambitious, and politically relevant historical archaeology, examining a breadth of material, including formal gardens, historic sites, urban plans, mass-produced tableware, and African diasporan spirit bundles. Every Harrington recipient's story is, perhaps, a narrative about the scholarly communities that Harrington medalists have fostered, and Mark shares with nearly every Harrington recipient such a circle of colleagues. The collective creativity of that community of scholars has produced a quite distinctive archaeological voice that revolves around how historical archaeology can be an intervention in the way contemporary society is viewed.

Most historical archaeologists know Mark for the research he has directed in Annapolis, Maryland, beginning in 1981. The Archaeology in Annapolis Project was, in many ways, an adaptation of Mark's own training in the 1960s. Mark began his graduate work at the University of Arizona in 1963, and he was a student in 1964 in the second field school at Grasshopper Pueblo. That field school was directed by Raymond Thompson, who taught

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Mark's first archaeology class at Arizona, and it included 2008 Harrington recipient Jim Ayres. A year earlier, the first field school at Grasshopper included 2009 Harrington Medalist Bob Schuyler. Not far away in Vernon, Arizona, the Field Museum's field school was directed by Paul S. Martin, who had over three decades of archaeological fieldwork experience in the American Southwest. By the early 1960s, Martin had become disaffected with much of his own descriptive research, and he became a convert to the New Archaeology, transformed by students and colleagues, including Bill Longacre. Lewis Binford's first doctoral student at the University of Chicago, Longacre was hired at the University of Arizona in 1964 and became Mark's advisor. Mark was among the first of Longacre's students, and Longacre secured him a post at Vernon.

The 1965 Vernon field school brochure championed the field school as "New Perspectives in Archaeology," reflecting immersion in the New Archaeology, and indicated that its mission was to train in "archaeology as anthropology," focused on the "scholarly ethnographic study of extinct cultures" (Mills 2005:74; Chazin and Nash 2013:334). Martin later argued that the Vernon field school was not focused on "teaching archaeological techniques," but was instead intended to "emphasize theory and method since these subjects are rarely dealt with in an academic context" (Chazin and Nash 2013:336). These field schools were philosophically ambitious, with Ezra Zubrow describing them as an "intellectual salon" (Chazin and Nash 2013:331). In 1968, the Vernon field school's staff of Fred Plog, Zubrow, and Mark hosted philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn as a guest lecturer alongside Leslie White, Robert McC. Adams, and Lewis and Sally Binford.

After completing his degree and publishing his doctoral analysis in *Science* in 1968 (Leone 1968), Mark became an assistant professor at Princeton University, and in 1972 he edited the collection *Contemporary Archaeology* (Leone 1972). Published a decade after Binford's "Archaeology as Anthropology," Leone's collection remains one of the most thorough surveys of the New Archaeology and gathers together nearly all the practitioners of 1960s anthropological archaeology: the 33 contributors include Martin, Longacre, Binford, Raymond Thompson, and Walter Taylor alongside their students, including James Deetz, Robert Schuyler, William Rathje, and Mark Leone. *Contemporary Archaeology* has since gone through five printings, but it came at a moment that the New Archaeology was itself transforming. Mark did not subsequently read the last rites over the New Archaeology, and his framework for conducting archaeology has remained persistently committed to scientific rigor. Nevertheless, Mark has advocated an archaeology consistently motivated by a commitment to social relevance, which was perhaps not part of many New Archaeologists' agendas.

The seeds for that interest in the political implications of archaeology had been planted in part by Lewis Binford's research on the material dimensions of ideology, and, during his tenure at Princeton, Mark was introduced to Marxian theory by his colleague Steve Barnett and Barnett's students. Marxism provided Mark a mechanism to extend the New Archaeology's intellectual foundations into the modern world and examine how archaeology functions in contemporary society. Perhaps the first test of this thinking came in Mark's work on Mormon material culture and economy, which included work on town plans, fences, and the new Mormon temple in Washington, D.C., near the University of Maryland, where he had moved in 1975 (Leone 1973, 1974, 1977). His paper examining the relationship between ideology and architecture at the Mormon temple appeared in the 1977 SHA Special Publication Series No. 2, *Historical Archaeology and the Importance of Material Things*, which was based on a 1975 SHA session. Mark, perhaps, did not imagine his analysis of the Mormon temple as his entry point into historical archaeology, but he legitimized it as historical archaeology because it "attempts to treat a piece of material culture in its whole social context" (Leone 1977:43). Mark recognized a view of archaeology that revolved around broadly defined materiality, acknowledging that the study "could also be called art history or architectural analysis or plain ethnography, but I am interested in calling it archaeology because it allows me to highlight the role of form—built, three dimensional form—in human behavior" (Leone 1977:43). In 1979,

he published *The Roots of Modern Mormonism*, which synthesized his thinking on Mormon ideology and material culture (Leone 1979).

Within a few years of the 1977 volume, Mark was pressing the distinction between past and present, influenced by the work of Ian Hodder and his students at Cambridge, who argued that archaeological thought was an expression of contemporary society (Leone 1978a, 1978b, 1981b, 1982). Mark turned his attention to shallow notions of material culture, heritage, and relevance in public historical and archaeological scholarship, with much of that scholarship focusing on the interpretation of material culture in museums (Leone 1981c, 1983a, 1983b, 1989b, 1992, 1994a, 2008; Leone and Handsman 1989). In "Archaeology's Relationship to the Present and the Past," his contribution to the 1981 Richard Gould and Michael Schiffer volume *Modern Material Culture: The Archaeology of Us*, Mark accused archaeology of being boring, if not irrelevant, and laid the blame for this tedium at the feet of archaeologists, suggesting that "we are primarily concerned with accurate meaning and feel no obligation to notice the boredom our own interpretations communicate when made public" (Leone 1981a:12). For Mark, that tedium confirmed archaeology's irrelevance, and he argued that "when boredom accompanies archaeology, it is because the facts and the data are not tied to the present the way they should be" (Leone 1981a:13).

Armed with this commitment to examining how materiality and ideology shape historical and contemporary experience, Mark launched Archaeology in Annapolis in 1981. The project advocated a reflective public archaeology of contemporary social and material life, using excavation and material analysis to help community audiences rethink the roots of otherwise unrecognized modern practices. Mark argued for a public presentation of historical archaeology that is today relatively widely accepted: that is, archaeological sites provide exceptionally powerful spaces in which to conduct public archaeologies that involve rigorous ethnography, thorough documentary analysis, and community outreach (Leone 1994b). Yet, the heart of Archaeology in Annapolis was a very assertive critique of the city's romanticized historical narratives and shallow public scholarship. Archaeological research in Annapolis has attempted to intervene in heroic stories of the past and focused on narrating the underside of American democracy (Leone and Logan 1997; Leone, Delle et al. 1999; Leone, Matthews et al. 2002; Leone, Babiarz et al. 2005; Leone 2006b, 2009, 2010).

Among the most prominent of Mark's Annapolis studies was his 1984 analysis of the William Paca Garden, which examined how the American patriots rationalized their societal domination in beautiful formal gardens (Leone 1984); also see Leone (1987, 1988b, 1989a), Leone and Shackel (1987, 1990b), Leone and Hurry (1998), Leone and Gleason (2013a, 2013b), Leone and Pruitt (2015), and Leone, Harmon et al. (2005). Those gardens were interpreted as pleasurable diversions of Renaissance men, but Mark argued that they were, instead, material mechanisms that the Founding Fathers wielded to rationalize their power and prominence in American society. Mark's pronouncement that gardens were self-interested mechanisms of class inequality was an important contribution to landscape archaeology studies aspiring to press beyond description alone (Leone 1984). Yet, the focus on gardens and broader spaces of power struck a sour note with some observers who viewed archaeology as a search for fascinating things for adorning local historical narratives. Archaeology in Annapolis has had significant influence on historical archaeology in its advocacy of self-conscious and politicized archaeological practice; however, it has left little mark on Annapolis city planners and preservationists and, in some cases, has been actively dismissed. Some people were angered that Mark had the confidence to proclaim that celebratory local histories in places like Annapolis inelegantly evaded a complex and very un-American heritage, but the argument has resonated with scholars who negotiate similarly stale local stories of timeless national values and patriotism.

Archaeology in Annapolis followed a similar model developed at Vernon, with graduate students conducting research on various dimensions of the city's archaeological past. The earliest generation included Barbara Little and Paul Shackel, who both were students of Leone's former classmate Ezra Zubrow. Over the course of four field seasons, from 1983 to 1986,

Little directed field school excavations at the Green Print Shop; Shackel examined the material culture of modern discipline, completing his dissertation in 1987; and Parker Potter completed a dissertation on public archaeology and critical theory in 1989. Fifteen dissertations have been completed as part of Archaeology in Annapolis, and many of these have been published as monographs and peer-reviewed scholarship.

Mark coauthored the 1987 paper, "Toward a Critical Archaeology," with Potter and Shackel, and it remains perhaps the clearest statement of Mark's vision of critical thinking in historical archaeology (Leone, Potter et al. 1987); see also Leone (1986, 1991, 2003, 2006a, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c). Leone, Potter, and Shackel outlined an explicitly Marxian framework for "demystifying" how the past is constructed and the ways in which prosaic material things reproduce consequential ideologies. The paper's advocacy for public archaeology is perhaps now a settled issue, since most contemporary field practice embraces public interpretation, even if it remains cool to Marxian critical theory. The more important contribution of the paper may have been that it stood among a series of scholarly works that assertively turned the discipline's attention to capitalism (Paynter 1988; Johnson 1996; Orser 1996). In 1983, Mark had begun exploring the archaeology of the capitalist world when he delivered a series of lectures on materiality and capitalism during a trip to the United Kingdom. By 1988, the edited collection, *The Recovery of Meaning* (Leone and Potter 1988), included Mark's paper in which he argued that the Georgian order was properly understood as an expression of merchant capitalism (Leone 1988a, 1999). The paper aspired to extend James Deetz's famous argument for a Georgian worldview emerging in the 18th century, and Leone rooted that transformation in the social and material effects of 18th-century capitalist economics (Leone and Shackel 1990a).

Mark's advocacy of an historical archaeology focus on capitalism and the ways in which archaeologists can illuminate the roots of contemporary inequality became a central theme of his work. In 1993, he chaired the School of American Research Seminar, "Historical Archaeology of Capitalism," which was published as the edited collection, *Historical Archaeologies of Capitalism* (Leone and Potter 1999); see also Leone and Knauf (2015). In 1995, his *American Anthropologist* article, "A Historical Archaeology of Capitalism," reflected his evolving notion of the public politicization of archaeology and the ways historical archaeology might destabilize shallow notions of democracy and liberty. In the article he acknowledged that, "for a historical archaeology of capitalism to be possible, there would have to be dialogue with those who see knowledge about themselves as a way of dealing with their own oppression or victimization" (Leone 1995:261–262).

This interest in oppressed peoples reflected the project's research on African diasporan heritage, which began after Mark returned from teaching at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, in 1988. In 1990, Archaeology in Annapolis conducted its first African American archaeological research, work that eventually produced a series of studies on the materiality of African diasporan faith, the lives of free people of color, and postbellum African American life (Leone and Crosby 1987; Leone, Mullins et al. 1995; Leone and Fry 1999; Leone, Fry et al. 2001; Ruppel et al. 2003; Leone, Palus et al. 2006; Leone and Cuddy 2007; Deeley et al. 2013; Leone, Tang et al. 2013; Leone, Knauf et al. 2014; Leone and Tang 2014). Perhaps the best known of this scholarship examines the material remains of West African spirituality, identifying the complex material culture of African diasporan faith in captivity and freedom alike. In many ways, that work on African spiritualities spoke most clearly to Mark's interest in exploring how marginalized people negotiate capitalism. His 2005 study, *The Archaeology of Liberty in an American Capital: Excavations in Annapolis*, summarized the work conducted in Annapolis over more than 25 years, but, in many ways, it features the archaeological evidence of African faith (Leone 2005). The findings at a series of Annapolis sites (and subsequent analysis of comparable features elsewhere) have proven fascinating beyond archaeological circles because they so clearly unravel romanticized histories of captivity and underscore diasporan creativity and agency.

Mark's work has focused on the complications of American democracy, but his influence extends into global historical archaeology circles. He has been a tireless advocate for the discipline as a lecturer in places including South America, the United Kingdom, Western Europe, and Australia, and he served as a Fulbright Scholar in Chile in 2009. Yet, the legacies of Mark's scholarship may rest most significantly with the thousands of students whom he and his students have trained. Fifteen dissertations have been completed as part of Archaeology in Annapolis, with students hailing from institutions including the State University of New York at Buffalo, Brown University, Columbia University, the University of Massachusetts Amherst, the University of Virginia, and the University of Maryland, and legions more have trekked through their excavations and classrooms. The scholarship produced by Mark and Archaeology in Annapolis make the rather unremarkable Maryland capital exceptionally well understood from an historical archaeological perspective. Mark's wife, Nan Wells, and his daughter, Veronika Wells Leone, have been the heart of the circle of people supporting Mark and his scholarship, providing much of the stability that made his archaeology possible. As archaeologists we should not necessarily entertain the fantasy that Mark will be complacent with the state of the discipline, but it is a testimony to Mark's voice that we now consider historical archaeology a publicly engaged scholarship that can and should intervene in contemporary life.

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