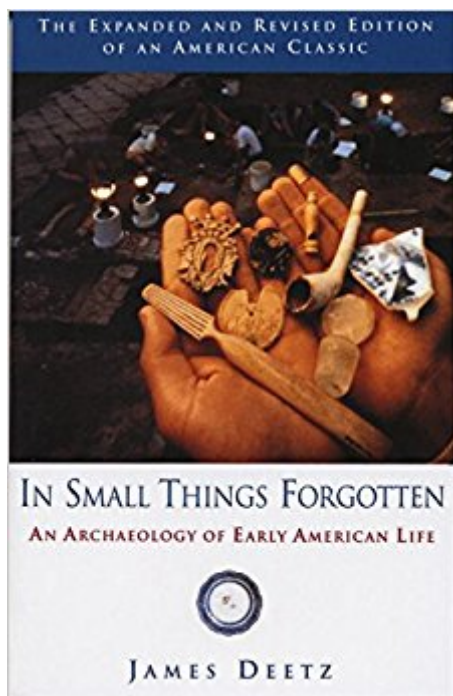


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In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology Of Early American Life



Synopsis

History is recorded in many ways. According to author James Deetz, the past can be seen most fully by studying the small things so often forgotten. Objects such as doorways, gravestones, musical instruments, and even shards of pottery fill in the cracks between large historical events and depict the intricacies of daily life. In his completely revised and expanded edition of *In Small Things Forgotten*, Deetz has added new sections that more fully acknowledge the presence of women and African Americans in Colonial America. New interpretations of archaeological finds detail how minorities influenced and were affected by the development of the Anglo-American tradition in the years following the settlers' arrival in Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620. Among Deetz's observations: Subtle changes in building long before the Revolutionary War hinted at the growing independence of the American colonies and their desire to be less like the British. Records of estate auctions show that many households in Colonial America contained only one chair--underscoring the patriarchal nature of the early American family. All other members of the household sat on stools or the floor. The excavation of a tiny community of freed slaves in Massachusetts reveals evidence of the transplantation of African culture to North America. Simultaneously a study of American life and an explanation of how American life is studied, *In Small Things Forgotten*, through the everyday details of ordinary living, colorfully depicts a world hundreds of years in the past.

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Customer Reviews

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This book was required reading for two of my graduate level History courses. It introduces the reader to ways to learn about the past by combining objects and archaeological sites with written documentation and oral history accounts. The information is useful and it is delivered in an interesting manner, making this book easy and fun to read. I highly recommend.

Critiques of this book notwithstanding, this is a classic text for archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, and those interested in the history of early settlement in the US. The models Deetz proposes for understanding anything from architecture to graves present a fascinating means of the numerous data presented here and even when stretched too thin, his concepts are still rather compelling and completely enthralling. His writing is part of what makes his books especially enjoyable. He is a neat thinker and an accessible writer. This book offers a great way of accessing the world of things within an historical context.

I enjoyed Deetz' newly updated introduction to Historical Archaeology in America. He makes clear that much can be gleaned from the seemingly insignificant material things that are left behind in the process of living. I greatly enjoyed his putting the pieces of the puzzles together. Sometimes the result was an interesting surprise. For instance, I didn't know that porches, which became so popular in America, were not a feature of European houses and were introduced by Africans. "Shotgun houses" also have African roots. Another surprising story is told by the changing styles of Colonial gravestones. They change subtly as the religious climate changes. The oldest being very stiff and stern and later ones becoming more decorative, replacing deaths heads with angels.

very interesting book!

good book.deals with the subject mater in an educated and readable way.

Good for those starting out in Historical Archaeology, and also good as a refresher.

Great research book for understand early American history.

First, I have always enjoyed the writings of Jim Deetz. His work was innovative and opened doors to new ways of looking at the past. Second, this book is a little treasure that deserved to be reprinted.

And, finally, anyone interested in the past will find this book of interest and it will cause them to think differently about our past.

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