



# **People, Places, and Material Things: Historical Archaeology of Albany, New York. New York State Museum Bulletin 499**

*Charles L. Fisher*

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The last decade has been a period of archaeological activity in Albany unlike any other in the city's history in terms of the size and quantity of investigations that were completed. This volume presents some of the recent results of archaeological excavations in Albany to archaeologists and others with an interest in the material remains of this city's past. Following the initial chapters that provide a brief overview of the history of Albany and a history of archaeology in Albany, the chapters are organized under the topics related to daily life in the past: people, places, and material things. The final section presents chapters concerned with battles and breakthroughs or challenges that archaeologists in Albany have faced in the process of investigating this city.

That early Albany was a multicultural community is continually revealed in new ways by archaeological evidence. There is no single, unified past of the city that can be revealed by a single individual or group, but many pasts described by the multiple voices of the former inhabitants. The illegal traders outside Fort Orange in the seventeenth century, the persecuted religious minority, the cottage industrialists who made wampum, soldiers of the colonial wars, servants, and even a middle-class lawyer are among the subjects of archaeological studies included here. Although historic documents have provided names for some of these individuals, the silence of documentary records regarding their daily lives begs for archaeological exploration. The material things that were created, used, exchanged, and discarded by the people of Albany at specific places are the primary sources of these archaeological studies. Places in the landscape of historic Albany may be considered as larger material objects created for a variety of reasons. Gardens, yards, cemeteries, military structures, pottery dumps, and the development of the waterfront have come to light through archaeological investigations, which provide new perspectives on daily life and the way that the urban environment was created and then shaped peoples lives.

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