

known participation of African Americans in the 1950s excavations at the house. Teresa S. Moyer argues that museum exhibits should confront difficult issues like racism and encourage social activism.

Although several chapters that attempt to fit archaeological research into intellectual frameworks for civic engagement and types of social justice are replete with jargon, well-written studies by Paul A. Shackel, David A. Gadesby and Robert C. Chidester, Stahlgren and Stottman, and Adrian Praetzellis make this volume worthwhile to historians who work actively with the public. Many authors discuss how they established relationships with stakeholders and how the research could address past and present injustices. Most of the investigations were preliminary, so it was often unclear how the research would answer contemporary concerns beyond serving as a lightning rod for group identity and activism. I would have liked to see more concrete examples of how archaeologists can “combine indigenous values with an academic research agenda” (61) or find “concrete material evidence of impoverishment over time” (105).

Several authors provide exciting examples of archaeology’s potential to address issues that resonate among disadvantaged populations. For instance, Shackel suggests that racism may account for differences in food habits in New Philadelphia, Illinois, although these differences may also derive from varied dietary preferences that the town’s inhabitants brought with them from other regions. I was intrigued with evidence that black railroad workers living in West Oakland decorated their homes with fine items consistent with the Victorian upperclass tastes that they encountered every day in Pullman cars.

In several instances, archaeology contributed significantly to issues of concern to underprivileged groups by attracting the attention of those in power. In West Oakland, interest in archaeological work after the Loma Prieta earthquake spurred on the revitalization of a once-vibrant neighborhood that had suffered from urban renewal programs and the routing of the Cypress Freeway through their community. Meagan Brooks’s excavations of Doukhobor pithouses not only made the descendants of this Russian religious sect proud of their heritage, it also improved their relations with the Saskatchewan government. The challenge for archaeologists and local communities alike is how to sustain the civic engagement begun by the projects described here.

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New Solutions for House Museums: Ensuring the Long-Term Preservation of America’s Historic Houses by DONNA ANN HARRIS. Lanham, MD: Alta-Mira Press, 2007; paperbound, \$27.95.

No one will deny the problem: long struggling with inadequate or non-existent endowments, deferred maintenance, and declining visitation, historic

house museums are in trouble. What were the legacies of many women-based membership preservation organizations have become the burdens of the government and well-intentioned but financially strapped friends groups. This dilemma, widespread as it is, has been on the minds of preservationists, cultural historians, architects, and generally those people who love old buildings.

The number of historic house museums multiplied during the history boom of the American Bicentennial, which was also a heyday of government sponsorship and support. A decade or two later, these same vital organizations found themselves in dire straits—the very buildings and sites that members came together to preserve had deteriorated and the aging membership clung to models of management that were keeping up with neither the costs of operations nor the changing desires of audiences.

Donna Harris's book, *New Solutions for House Museums*, is a kind of call to arms, but not in any traditional sense. She does not say that we must redouble our energies to make these places rich with visitor entry fees so that we can all maintain the properties as historic house museums. Instead, she tells her primary audience—the trustees, staff, and volunteers at these special places—that “museum use is not necessarily the best conclusion for every hard-won preservation battle” (4).

Harris's book is organized in a very clear fashion: Part I is titled “Assessment and Decision Making.” There she charts the course of historic house development, discusses the legal and ethical issues in changing ownership or use, and outlines the sometimes tortured decision-making process when considering that difficult transition. At every step, the author displays an empathetic objectivity of a sort that one imagines a counselor might in advising parents considering giving up a “baby” for adoption.

Part II begins with an overview of the eight solutions that the author then highlights in chapters 7 to 15. Each of the solutions comes in the form of a well-chosen case study: Historic New England, Margaret Mitchell House and Museum (Atlanta, Georgia), and Casa Amesti (Monterey, California) are three of them. With each of the eight examples, Harris explains the administrative history of the property, the nature of the governing board, the peculiarities of each situation and, most importantly, the reason why the solutions embraced by each case study fits that particular group. Each example comes with a section titled “How to Use This Case Study,” which is especially helpful if the reader is trying to match his or her situation with a particular set of circumstances. So as not to tip Harris's hand, I only list a few of the eight solutions that she discusses in detail: sale to another nonprofit stewardship organization (or private owner) with easements, creation of a study house, merger with another house museum organization, or lease to a for-profit entity for an adaptive use.

Harris comes well positioned to write such a book and to summarize some of the issues that have dogged many public historians. Having attended several of Harris's presentations at museum and public history annual meetings

during recent years, I have anticipated her published work that has been generously funded by innovative donors—The Pew Charitable Trusts and the James Marston Fitch Charitable Foundation. A Columbia University School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation graduate and twenty-year veteran as historic preservation executive and project manager, Harris has wrestled creatively with the dilemma that has faced or will soon face many who work in historic house museums. She has written an especially critical handbook for museum trustees, staff members, and volunteer leaders who are currently struggling with long-term plans for the health of their structures and sites.

Besides this audience, however, I recommend that the book be considered required or recommended reading as part of any number of public history classes. Learning well these proposed alternatives-to-museums will stand our students in good stead as they prepare to manage the nation's historic houses in the coming decades. Those graduates who are familiar with the concepts and with the application of multiple strategies for preservation will be not only more employable, but they will also be more effective stewards of the built environment.

Donna Harris has done a great service for historic house museums and the people who are passionate about them. The solutions and strategies for their “saving” are not always new, as the author acknowledges, but she presents the strategies in a well-organized and very understandable format. Perhaps just as importantly as making the information extremely accessible, the author helps remove a certain guilt about asking for help with regard to maintenance and ongoing management. And she does not flinch from telling organizations that they are in for some difficult times.

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The Making of Harper's Ferry National Historical Park: A Devil, Two Rivers, and a Dream by TERESA S. MOYER and PAUL A. SHACKEL. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2007; 264 pp.; paperbound, \$27.95.

Having had several years to gain perspective on my six years of employment at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (1994–2000), I am more convinced today than ever that it ranks among the most fascinating historical sites in America. The manifestations of history are legion: early American industrial history, John Brown's effort to overturn slavery by capturing the United States army and arming slaves, the changing tides of the Civil War as the town pin-balled back and forth between Northern and Southern control, and the legacy of abolitionism that brought W.E.B. Du Bois and other African-American leaders to Harpers Ferry in 1906 to set in motion the chain of events that led to the founding of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. If that were not enough, the town can boast