The Shore Whalers of Western Australia: 
Historical Archaeology of a Maritime Frontier

Studies in Australasian Historical Archaeology 2

Martin Gibbs
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Every winter between 1836 to 1879 small wooden boats left the bays of southwest Western Australia to hunt for migrating Humpback and Right whales. In the early years of European settlement these small shore whaling parties and the whale oil they produced were an important part of the colonial economy, yet over time their significance diminished until they virtually vanished from the documentary record.

*The Shore Whalers of Western Australia* uses archival research and archaeological evidence to examine the history and operation of this almost forgotten industry on the remote maritime frontier of the British Empire, and the role of the whalers in the history of early contact between Europeans and Aboriginal people.

Member’s price AUD$35 + p&h

Archeology of the Chinese Fishing Industry in Colonial Victoria

Studies in Australasian Historical Archaeology 3

Alister M Bowen
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The arrival of some 35,000 Chinese gold miners to Victoria during the 1850s increased demand for fish, a Chinese dietary staple. By the mid-1850s, some overseas Chinese people in Australia were pursuing a livelihood from fish. They fished, purchased great quantities of fish from European fishermen, cured fish on a large scale, constructed infrastructure, and made sums of money far greater than any European fishing operation. Until now, nobody really knew anything about the fish-curers; it seems to have been a forgotten part of Australia’s history.

The focus of this monograph is the Chinese involvement in Victoria’s colonial Fishing Industry. The aims are to establish if archaeological sites representing a Chinese fishing industry exist, to identify and interpret what artefacts such sites contain, and to better understand the complex social and cultural systems by which they operated. While operating within a European based society, Chinese people in colonial Australia maintained a highly secretive, tightly woven, self-sufficient style of social organisation that enabled them to successfully turn economic opportunities into capital. Documentary evidence for Chinese involvement in Victoria’s fishing industry is very limited. In order to explore and describe aspects of their activities, and to construct and test related hypotheses, historical archaeological investigation proved to be a most rewarding avenue.

Member’s price: AUD$35 + p&h
The archaeological assemblage from the Hyde Park Barracks is one of the largest, most comprehensive and best preserved collections of artefacts from any nineteenth-century institution in the world. Concealed for up to 160 years in the cavities between floorboards and ceilings, the assemblage is a unique archaeological record of institutional confinement, especially of women. The underfloor assemblage dates to the period 1848 to 1886, during which a female Immigration Depot and a Government Asylum for Infirm and Destitute Women occupied the second and third floors of the Barracks. Over the years the women discarded and swept beneath the floor thousands of clothing and textile fragments, tobacco pipes, religious items, sewing equipment, paper scraps and numerous other objects, many of which rarely occur in typical archaeological deposits. These items are presented in detail in this book, and provide unique insight into the private lives of young female migrants and elderly destitute women, most of whom will never be known from historical records.

Member’s price: AUD$40 + p&h

Melbourne grew during the nineteenth century from its fledgling roots into a global metropolitan centre and was home to many people from a range of social and cultural backgrounds. The Martin family arrived in Melbourne in 1839 and soon established themselves at the genteel Viewbank estate near Heidelberg. They were typical of the early, middle-class immigrants to Melbourne who brought their gentility and privilege with them to the colony. The Martins spent many years at Viewbank, and the physical remains they left behind provide a valuable case study for examining class negotiation in the colony through historical archaeology. In this important study, material culture is used to understand the unique way in which the Martin family used gentility to establish and maintain their class position.

Member’s price: AUD$40 + p&h