

Remembering an Industrial Landscape

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Published online: 29 April 2006

Abandoned industrial factories and decaying communities have become a common sight in many places throughout the western world. Since the beginning of the postindustrial age communities have needed to make decisions about how to deal with these industrial landscapes. The celebration and interpretation of these places become important in a region's heritage. The struggle between labor and capital to control the meaning of the past is ongoing. Often, when under the control of government agencies, the story of labor is overshadowed by the benefits of industrial and engineering feats. Working-class histories, which are readily available for public interpretation, are omitted or downplayed in an industrial site's official memory.

Virginia Island, located in Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, is one example where a working-class history is available for public interpretation, although the park continues to promote industrial heritage over working-class heritage. While archaeological investigations over the past several decades on the island have mainly focused on recovering signatures of its industry, recent work has explored the lives of the workers and their families who toiled in this industrial community. The latest effort to stabilize above-ground ruins that continues into the early twenty-first century has concentrated exclusively on the industrial sites. The interpretation of the island and the development of trails have made many of the industrial ruins accessible to the public. Today the National Park Service spends considerable time protecting, stabilizing, and interpreting the industrial sites on the park's landscape. It is obvious that the histories fading from the official memory are those that belong to the craft-oriented and working-class community.

KEY WORDS: industrial landscapes; memory; public interpretation; national parks.

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INTRODUCTION: REMEMBERING LABOR IN THE UNITED STATES

The rise of industry in the United States impacted landscapes, labor, gender roles, and living conditions. Today, what remains of America's industrial centers are rusting factories, abandoned buildings, deserted mines, scarred landscapes, and decaying cities and towns. These are all reminders of an economy that was once dominated by industrial capitalism for more than a century. By the early 1960s the U.S. and other western economies transformed as they moved into a postindustrial age. Service industries replaced manufacturing as the main form of employment and industrial jobs began their long and steady decline, going overseas in search of cheaper and nonunionized labor.

Communities and government agencies have debated about how to use abandoned industrial properties. The strategies have ranged from redevelopment, reuse, commemoration, and elimination. These are all policies that will ultimately affect the way we remember the industrial past. As the U.S. and Western Europe move into their postindustrial phase, industrial archaeology developed as a profession and practitioners began to record and preserve the remains of industries before they disappeared from the landscape. During the 1960s remembering the industrial era became an important part of America's national identity. Monumental landscapes, memorials and museums developed, like Saugus National Historic Site (1968), Springfield Armory National Historic Site (1978), and the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor (1986), as well as many others, in order to use the past to celebrate the benefits of industrial capitalism. However, we believe it is also important to use these places to discuss issues of industrial labor and working-class life.

What we remember and celebrate on the landscape helps to serve and legitimize the past and the present. Public history exhibits, monuments, statues, artifacts, national historic parks, commemorations, and celebrations can foster the myths that create a common history that allows for divergent groups to find a common bond (Glasberg, 1996, p. 13). Traditional meanings associated with the American collective national memory have focused on elites and traditional heroes, often leaving "others" out of the picture. At many former industrial sites that have become regional and national museums, visitors are often told about the glories of economic and social progress resulting from industry. The U.S. federal government remains strong in propping this idea and helps create landscapes that validate this version of the past.

The struggle for memory at industrial sites between labor and capital can sometimes be shared and rooted in consensus, although at times it can also be contentious. One example of controversial meanings to the struggle to control the memory of an event is the Haymarket Strike of 1886. Industrial workers protested for an 8-hour workday and workers at the McCormick factory went on strike to support this measure. On May 4th about 3000 people heard speeches

decriing the murders of strikers who died one day earlier. At the end of the day the event turned violent. As the protest was ending, about 200 police marched on the dwindling crowd and ordered them to disperse. A bomb was thrown into the police formation and the police retaliated by firing on the protesters. At the end of the day 4 demonstrators were killed, and many injured. Seven police officers died and another 60 were injured, many from cross-fire. Eight of the strike leaders were arrested, and all convicted; seven were sentenced to death and one to prison. Four of the seven who were sentenced to death were hanged on May 11, 1887. Two had the governor commute their sentence to life in prison, and one hanged himself the morning of the execution. Civic authorities banned their burial inside the city of Chicago; therefore, forcing the labor union to bury them in Waldheim Cemetery, in Forest Park, outside of the city limits (Footo, 1997, pp. 133-140).

The Haymarket memorialization became a struggle between the left and the right (Dabakis, 1998). The business community claimed the police were martyrs and proclaimed that they were "Protectors of Chicago," even though the police helped to ignite the riot. Business leaders claimed the site of the bombing and erected a policemen's monument. They prevented labor from memorializing its martyrs within the city limits. The labor martyrs' gravesite at Waldheim Cemetery became the commemorative place for industrial workers. A large memorial marks the grave that depicts justice in the figure of a woman, placing a laurel wreath on the head of a fallen worker with her left hand and a drawn sword in the other hand. Thousands came to its unveiling in 1893 and it remains a pilgrimage site and a subject of regular commemoration (Footo, 1997, pp. 136-137).

The business community decided in 1888 to build a memorial to the police at the site of the riot, although many of the city's citizens saw the police as hired hands of the industrialists and they gave little support to the memorial. The police memorial has been vandalized for decades and destroyed twice, before it was eventually moved indoors to the police academy. The Haymarket incident is unique since both sides are represented on the landscape, both with very different lessons (Footo, 1997, pp.138-140).

In many cases unions, union leaders who keep the memory of labor alive, and at times archaeology have all served in memorializing labor's heritage. For instance, the archaeology at Ludlow, which is supported by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), raises the visibility of a bloody episode in labor relations in Colorado, and it is helping to make this incident part of the broader public memory (Ludlow Collective, 2001, pp. 94-107; McGuire and Reckner, 2002, pp. 44-58; Walker, 2000, pp. 60-75; Wood, 2002). Over 12000 workers went on strike for better wages and better working conditions in September 1913. April of the following year marked one of the bloodiest assaults on American organized labor. In an armed conflict with the National Guard, 26 people were killed including a dozen women and children. "They were striking for the work benefits we enjoy today," Dean Saitta, one of the project's co-principals remarked.

"Safe working conditions, the 8-hour workday—these are things that the strikers were lobbying for. If we value those workplace benefits, it's good to remind ourselves every now and then that they were won with blood and gained through struggle." (*University of Denver Magazine*, 2003). In 2003 an unknown vandal decapitated the statue, but by 2005 the monument was restored and rededicated by the UMW (The Militant, 2005).

REMEMBERING LABOR ON AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) claims that our cultural heritage is an irreplaceable source of life and inspiration and the organization has been instrumental in commemorating significant industrial landscapes. In a 1972 international treaty adopted by UNESCO members sought to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world considered to be of outstanding value to humanity. Among the many goals of UNESCO's World Heritage mission is to protect sites, encourage the nomination of sites and the development of management plans. The treaty helps state systems with technical and emergency assistance as well as supporting public awareness building activities. Today there are over 800 World Heritage Sites and 33 are related to the heritage of industry.

England has more industrial-related sites than any other country. For instance, in the Derwent Valley, which includes six communities along a stretch of 15 miles, is known as the "cradle of the new factory system." It is recognized by UNESCO for its well preserved factory buildings and the place where the Arkwright water frame made available the first continuous spinning process, which could be operated by machine tenders rather than skilled operatives. The invention revolutionized the British economy, and changed industrial labor. Factory owners created housing for their workers, and exerted a form of corporate paternalism. Industrialists did not create uniform pre-planned villages that became common later in the nineteenth century, like that found in Saltaire, England. This town is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site, founded in 1853 by Sir Titus Salt in order to provide better working and living conditions for his workers. The mills and workers' housing are built in a harmonious style of high architectural standards. The town's urban plan survives intact. Salt provided considerable recreation opportunities, as well as a library, although he had strong paternalistic control over his workers (UNESCO, n.d.).

While European countries have the majority of UNESCO's industrial sites, they are also found in China, India, Bolivia, Brazil and Mexico. None have been designated in North America. Many of these sites are included on the UNESCO list because of engineering feats such as bridges, canals, irrigations systems, aqueducts, railways, mines, ironworks, and resource extraction. Many districts

include the well preserved domestic housing for workers such as the City of Potosi in Bolivia, and the remarkably well-preserved example of the small-scale rural industrial settlements associated with pulp, paper and board production at Verla Groundwood in Finland. Crespi d'Adda in Italy is an outstanding example of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century company towns built in Europe and North America by enlightened industrialists to meet the workers' needs. The city of Røros, Norway is linked to the copper mining industry that developed in the seventeenth century and lasted until 1977. The city has about 80 wooden houses dating to the seventeenth century, most of them standing around courtyards, providing a medieval appearance in the town (UNESCO, n.d.).

While England is credited with the advent of the industrial revolution, by the end of the nineteenth century the Robber Barons of the United States controlled the world economy (Zimm, 2003). While several national parks and heritage areas in North America have developed to celebrate industry, UNESCO has not recognized the industrial age in North America. At many of these preserved sites the celebration of industrial feats is an important criterion for UNESCO recognition. In some of these cases workers' housing are included in the recognized districts, and in fewer cases are the lives of workers and their families recognized. While the new school of social history developed in the 1960s and called for a history from the bottom-up, and the inclusion of all peoples, labor is sometimes missing in our interpretations of the industrial revolution.

THE STORY OF INDUSTRY IN A NATIONAL PARK

Archaeologists working in industrial contexts need to make labor a significant part of their study, as many historians and anthropologists have done (Brody, 1979, 1980, 1993; Gutman, 1976; Montgomery, 1979; Wallace, 1978). Historical and anthropological perspectives on labor help to define issues related to the impact of changing technology on workers and their families. These transformations in industry not only affected work, but they also impacted domestic life and health conditions. Labor historian David Brody (1989, pp. 7-18) has also encouraged scholars to look more closely at issues related to politics and power. Some archaeologists have made the inclusion of daily life a part of their archaeology in industrial settings (Beaudry and Mrozowski, 1989; Brashler, 1991; Costello, 1998; Shackel, 1996, 2000; Trinder and Cox, 2000; Van Buren, 2002; Wegars, 1991; Workman *et al.*, 1994). They have also looked at labor discontent (Nassaney and Abel, 1993). While the United States does not have any UNESCO sites that celebrate industrial heritage the role of state and federal agencies, like the National Park Service are instrumental in creating a memory of labor and industry.

Memory is a social process that is continuously being negotiated. We found the way people remember their collective past intriguing when researching the development of Virginus Island, a former industrial community now located in

Harpers Ferry National Historical Park (Palus, 2000; Palus and Shackel, 2006; Shackel, 1994, 1999, 2000). A conflict between the collective memory and the official memory exists.

Virginus Island lies close to Lower Town Harpers Ferry and their histories are closely linked. When reading the town's histories many of the stories of Harpers Ferry and Virginus Island end soon after the American Civil War. Visitors to the park often come away with the impression that the town reached its economic zenith and historical significance in the 1850s and 1860s and that the town had virtually disappeared because of the destructive floods of 1870 and 1877 (Shackel, 1996). Many of these histories are explicit about linking Harpers Ferry's place in history to the surrender of 12500 Union troops to Stonewall Jackson and the events that surround the raid on the Federal Armory by abolitionist John Brown and his followers (except Gilbert, 1984, 1999). More recent park interpretations from the 1990s have explored the role of the Niagara Movement (predecessor of the NAACP) in Harpers Ferry as well as the impact of industrialization on armory workers' families and boardinghouse life. However, the recent development to interpret the social history of the town to the broader public has not brought these more diverse histories to all areas of the park. The emphasis of the recent restoration and stabilization of industrial ruins on Virginus Island conveys a message of industrial progress, and it may be at the expense of the history of the working-class families that inhabited the industrial community.

The social history of Virginus Island is linked with the nineteenth-century developments that occurred at Harpers Ferry and the rest of the industrializing Middle-Atlantic region. Harpers Ferry itself was a small settlement at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah rivers, selected in 1794 by President Washington as a suitable site for the construction of one of the country's two national armories. While most of the lands and all of the industry in Harpers Ferry was owned and operated by the federal government, Virginus Island developed as a small, privately owned town. It became the center for craft, industry, and service facilities that supported the armory complex. Industrial enterprises on the island supplied processed raw materials and finished products to the U.S. Army and, over time, its industries expanded to cater to local, regional, and national markets. These businesses relied on waterpower supplied by an increasingly elaborate system of raceways and dams that cut across the island (Gordon and Malone, 1994, p. 93).

The island had increased access to regional markets after the 1830s with the development of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad and the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. It became easier to buy and sell goods, and the community became more cosmopolitan with increased capital (Halchin, 2000; Joseph *et al.*, 1993, pp. 3.16-3.23). The scale of production and organization of the private industries on Virginus Island shifted in the late 1840s and businesses turned increasingly toward national markets, i.e., flour and cotton produced for export. The island

was consolidated in the mid 1850s under one owner, Abraham Herr, who ran the various industries through partnerships, leasing, and direct management.

Abraham Herr developed a major industrial complex with male and female wage laborers and he took a paternalistic view toward the operations. He built living quarters for the workers and Herr's family's domicile stood adjacent to the flour mill and the workers' quarters; presumably so he could keep a close eye on their work and daily lives. Herr's contribution to bringing cotton and flour to Virginus Island was significant, and under Herr's ownership people no longer worked as craftsmen and eventually it became impossible for their offspring to acquire craft skills. With the deskilling of workers the era of the craftsman started to become a memory.

Because of the relatively high cost of arms production, the War Department decided not to rebuild the Harpers Ferry Armory following the Civil War (Snell, 1979, pp. 32-48). Industry never fully revitalized in Harpers Ferry, and Abraham Herr reduced his holdings in the town, moving his business to Georgetown. Entrepreneurs from Ohio, Jonathan Child and John McCreight converted the cotton mill to a flour mill. They struggled to make their enterprise profitable. Disastrous floods in 1870 and 1877 accelerated Virginus's deterioration and hampered industrial growth. Child and McCreight's corporate paternal role appears to have diminished substantially from Herr's ownership. They had 30 employees working in the mill. Even though they repaired most of the houses on the island and removed the flood debris, it is no longer clear if specific housing was set aside in designated areas for their employees. Boardinghouses were not reestablished during the Child and McCreight ownership of the Island (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1870).

In the 1870s the flour mill operated by Child and McCreight was the only major industry operating in the community. In the 1880s William Savery from Delaware purchased the armory grounds on the Potomac River, and Upper Halls Island on the Shenandoah River, and established two pulp mills. While Child and McCreight's flour mill discontinued operations in the late 1880s, the pulp mills existed into the 1930s. In 1893 Savery purchased the island community and managed the property as an absentee owner. Residing outside of the community, he rented the remaining houses on the island to pulp company workers and others, and when they fell into disrepair from neglect or from the floods he did little to make them habitable again (Gilbert, 1984, pp. 69-72; Joseph *et al.*, 1993, p. 3.52). Savery's control of Virginus and the relation to pulp enterprise brings this scenario into line with the rest of West Virginia history, where industrial extraction of wood surged in the 1880s and continued into the 1920s (Bergstresser, 1988, p. 35; Gilbert, 1984, p. 75).

Virginus Island once had close to 200 people living in the community. By the early twentieth century only a few households remained, and people continued to leave as their houses became uninhabitable from neglect and/or damaged by the

floods. The pulp mill closed in 1935 and the last inhabitants were displaced from the community during the 1936 flood. The island lay in ruins for several decades, only to be re-remembered and its industrial past celebrated with the stabilization and reconstruction of industrial ruins and the development of walking trails under the custodianship of the National Park Service.

REMEMBERING VIRGINIUS ISLAND

The Writer's Program, a Great Depression works project, compiled local histories for many states. Its 1941 history of West Virginia, which includes Harpers Ferry, is intriguing because much of the town's post-Civil War history is ignored. Even though the northern entrepreneurs Child and McCreight purchased the island from Herr in 1867, and operated a flour mill until 1887, Herr is recognized as owning and operating the flour mill in the postwar era, even though it was destroyed during the Civil War and part of its ruins remained standing until the 1950s (Writer's Program, 1941). In fact, during a 1994 oral history interview, a former Virginus Island resident drew a map (Fig. 1) of the community on which she labeled the island "Hairs [sic] Island" (Farmer, 1995). Working-class families have chosen to forget the town's Victorian industrial history, a time when northern



Fig. 1. Edna Farmer's 1995 map of Virginus Island labeled "Hair's [sic] Island," showing row/houses and railroad spur.

entrepreneurs controlled the town's economy and labor force. While the town had industrial success, the people chose to forget their exploitation as well as their relatives' (Shackel, 1994). This view is still perpetuated by the ruin stabilization project approaching completion on the island today.

The masking of class history in the official public memory has been documented in other communities. For instance, in Lawrence, Massachusetts, a workers' history was repressed by community memory for many generations. Labor historians best know this community for the Bread and Roses Strike of 1912, an event that closed most of the northeastern textile mills. Leaders of the Catholic Church claimed that it was instigated by the most "unsavory immigrants" and it left a stigma on those union activists who fought for greater wages and better working conditions (quoted in Sider, 1996, pp. 48–83). However, industrialists often subsidized churches in industrial communities, and the churches tried to maintain a docile workforce. After the event there were reprisals against strike leaders from supervisors and industrialists for the remaining time they spent working in the factory (Cameron, 1993, 1996).

Many of the histories of Harpers Ferry tend to be about prewar industry and the "great men" of the Civil War. Therefore, there are some similarities between what Sider (1996) found at Lawrence—the suppression of working-class histories—and Harpers Ferry, with the suppression of postbellum working-class histories. Histories written in the middle and late twentieth century conveyed that in the 1850s and 1860s the town had its most glorious and significant history (Moulton in Drickamer and Drickamer, 1987; Hearn, 1996; Smith, 1977). For instance author Bruce Roberts (1960, n.d.), noted:

After the war homes had been rebuilt by some of the former inhabitants of the town, but many "Ferrians" had to move away forever. The town, like a badly crippled soldier whose injuries leave him unable to compete in a post-war world, became a permanent casualty of the Civil War. So it happened that Harpers Ferry slipped out of the America of commerce and industry and into the stream of history.

If historians mentioned the town's postbellum history, it was often an afterthought, or footnote (for example, Everhart, 1952; Noffsinger, 1958; Snell, 1958, 1973, 1979).

When the National Park Service gained control of Harpers Ferry in the mid-1950s the objective of celebrating John Brown and the role the town played in the American Civil War dictated how Harpers Ferry was to be interpreted and restored. Adopting contemporary historic and preservation philosophies, the National Park Service removed many buildings that did not fit into the proposed 1859 through 1865 time period, and buildings with late nineteenth-century modifications were restored to this era of significance. The NPS kept several Victorian era structures in order to act as a flood buffer and protect the earlier built structures downriver during times of flooding.

Harpers Ferry's enabling legislation was written very broadly and beginning in the 1980s the administration of the park's interpretive programs responded to the call of the new social history. The creation of the Development Concept Plan and a new Interpretive Perspective recognized the failing of the previous attempts to time-freeze the park and the authors of the document called for a broadening of the park's interpretation, thus giving a new direction to restoration, landscape, history, interpretation, and archaeology. Harpers Ferry National Historical Park expanded its interpretive perspective to include the entire nineteenth century. Restoration projects began to consider not only the armory and Civil War histories, but also the later Victorian era. An exhibit dedicated to the African-American experience in Harpers Ferry opened in the early 1990s. The park now actively celebrates Black History Month, and in 1996 the park commemorated the nineteenth anniversary of the Niagara Movement meeting (predecessor to the NAACP) held in Harpers Ferry. Women's history is now a theme pursued by some living history staff members as they reexamine the roles and perspectives in the histories of the town that has traditionally been dominated by men. Archaeological materials used in a relatively new permanent park exhibit have made significant contributions to telling the story of the everyday interactions between people of varying status and ethnic affiliation during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In many cases, this changed historical and restoration philosophy has guided the most recent research and renovation projects at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. For instance, the cultural landscape analysis, historical research and archaeology on Virginus Island (Halchin *et al.*, 1992; Johnson and Barker, 1992; Joseph, *et al.*, 1993; Palus, 2000) have addressed issues that focused upon the everyday lives of residents who lived, prospered, struggled, and worked in this small industrial town. By reexamining the community's history it is clear that Harpers Ferry did revitalize after the Civil War and it became a small industrial town, and a tourist destination well into the 1920s. Working-class people resided on the island and worked in the mills or elsewhere, and interacted with people in the local Harpers Ferry community. While the National Park Service (NPS) is expanding its interpretive base, the reconstruction and stabilization work on Virginus Island has yet to cast an inclusive net on its local history. Following is an example showing how the histories of working-class people are marginalized when compared to interpreting industrial development. A national agency must pay attention to the multiple histories available and it needs to make sure they are a part of their interpretive agenda.

THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF VIRGINIUS ISLAND

The physical remains of the former industrial community of Virginus Island helps visitors understand its industrial past. Financial resources for stabilization

have focused on these industrial ruins, and signage for interpreting the remaining built environment has almost exclusively concentrated on industrial features. Two factory ruins and the head gates for the water raceway, all made of shale from the surrounding stone outcrops, stand out against the backdrop of the island. The one domestic site interpreted to the public belonged to the family of one of the industrial entrepreneurs, and the information on the wayside is about the floods that submerged the island. There is no information about the composition and daily life of the working-class community.

One of the most prominent industrial features on the island today is the reconstructed and stabilized ruin of the cotton factory, established by Abraham Herr and others in the late 1840s, which was later converted to a flour mill by Child and McCreight in the late 1860s. These ruins, referred to today as the cotton/flour mill, have received an enormous amount of attention in recent years and the focus of a concerted NPS effort to preserve and stabilize the island's industrial heritage. What was once a set of walls in decay that ranged in height from several feet (1 m) to over a dozen feet (about 4 m), with uneven surfaces, has been rebuilt to a uniform height of over a dozen feet (4 m) high with a smooth and even top course of stone resembling a surface paved for walking (Fig. 2). They do not retain the appearance of ruins. They look neither "restored" nor "reconstructed," but rebuilt to signify something other than a ruin, and something that will last longer in the



Fig. 2. Cotton/flour mill ruins on Virginus Island in 2002, after stabilization (photograph by Paul A. Shackel).

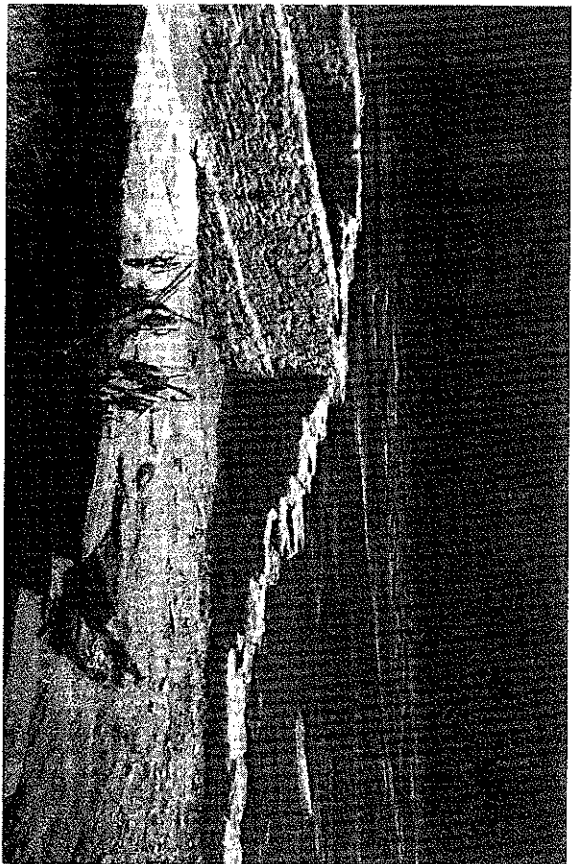


Fig. 3. Mill ruins after stabilization in 2002 showing signs of decay (photograph by Paul A. Shackel).

face of episodic flooding. While the NPS has taken great strides to preserve the ruin, and it was in desperate need of help, the walls do not give the impression that they have been impacted by decades of neglect or affected by environmental forces. It looks like the building is ready for the next stage of construction, the placement of a superstructure.

Walking on a natural path upriver there is a second set of ruins that once served as a thread mill in the late 1840s. The mill functioned for only a few years until a fire destroyed the building and the owners decided not to rebuild and refit the mill. There, the stabilization of ruins has a very different visual impact and meaning. The decay of the ruins has been arrested and the foundations of the structure are of varying heights (Fig. 3). These foundations give a sense of the built environment slowly being overcome by time and the natural environment. Industry thrived, and then faded at this place, and the ruins appear as though they have felt the impact of the river's force and its occasional flood.

Walking through Virginus Island it is easy to forget the existence of the former industrial town that once contained over a dozen industries and craft shops and housed close to 200 people. Linear depressions (about 1–2 ft [0.3–0.6 m] below the current surface and 5–10 ft [1.52 to 3.05 m] wide), which can easily be overlooked, are the remains of the raceway that fed the factories, machine shop, and saw mill downriver. At the end of the raceway is the head gate with three arches (Fig. 4). Most of the mortar is new and many of the stones have been replaced

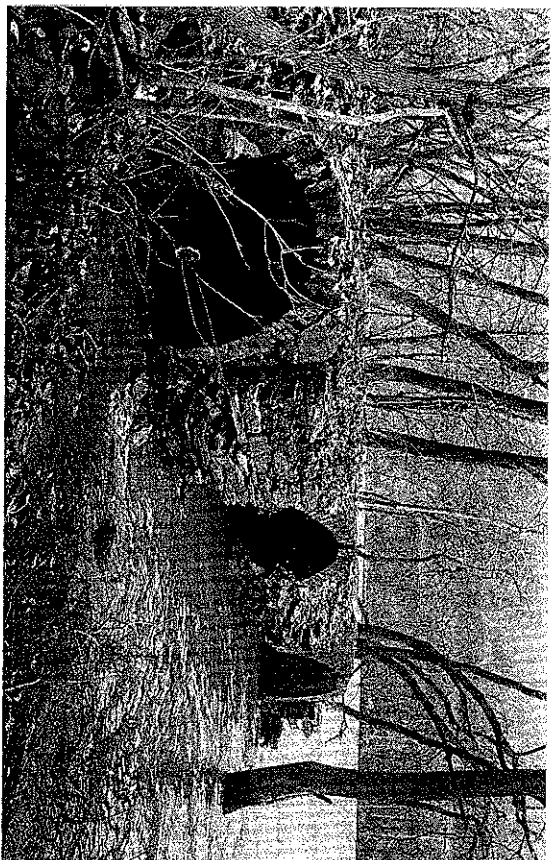


Fig. 4. Raceway headgates on Virginus Island, prior to stabilization (photograph by Paul A. Shackel).

or added to the feature. The top of the raceway is nicely finished, much like the cotton/flour mill. Stones have been loaded above the arches to better preserve the head gate, although it is higher than its original form. Standing on the raceway and looking toward the source of the river steel rebar and the partial remains of the stone crypt walls are visible. They once served as part of the dam system that channeled water through the head gate and into the raceway.

A cellar depression, about 4 ft (1.22 m) deep, located near the train track at the center of the island, is interpreted by the NPS as the remains of the Child House. The Child House serves as an important interpretive tool for the agency since they use Mrs. Child's written accounts of living through a major flood. The house was originally built for Abraham Herr's family, and it is situated close to another larger depression, the remains of Herr's flourmill. In the wintertime, the vegetation dies back and some of the walls and part of the raceway that fed the mill are visible. A NPS wayside sign describes the history of the site and the flourmill enterprise.

Across the railroad tracks stands a wayside that describes the importance of the railroad to the growth and development of Harpers Ferry. Between the railroad tracks and the river is an area that is seasonally cleared. While no interpretive signs describe the area, some fieldstones are visible on the surface, and in places it is easy to discern the outline of a building foundation. This area contains the remains of the row houses built by Abraham Herr for his workers. Even though a team of historians and archaeologists researched this area over a decade ago,

interpretive signage does not exist, and the majority of visitors are unaware that this area once housed workers and their families who toiled in the Virginius Island mills and elsewhere.

A short roadway known as Wernweg Street connects the Herr's boarding-houses with the remains of the house of Lewis Wernweg, an early inventor and Virginius Island industrialist. The Wernweg foundation ruin has trees growing out of or near it, impacting its stability and threatening its long-term integrity. Lewis Wernweg is considered by many as one of the most influential private industrial entrepreneurs to live in the Harpers Ferry area during its antebellum era. He designed bridges, including the design and construction of the Baltimore and Ohio Bridge that crossed the Potomac River. He also operated a machine shop and a saw mill on Virginius Island that catered to the U.S. Armory and local businesses. No interpretation exists that explains the contributions of this individual to the social history of the national park.

Many of the places described above have had historical and archaeological investigations. It is important to incorporate the history of workers into the daily interpretation of the site. Archaeology can be a powerful tool that can help tell the story of the daily lives of workers, industrial entrepreneurs and landscape development. Archaeology has the potential to tell the story from the bottom-up and it can help broaden the official meaning of the past at nationally significant sites.

SOME INTERPRETIVE ISSUES FOR AN INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITY

The earliest archaeology performed at Harpers Ferry by the NPS occurred during the 1950s and 1960s, at the arsenal square, Virginius Island, and Hall's Island, searching for remnants of Harpers Ferry's industrial history (see Cotter, 1959, 1960; Hannah, 1969; Larrabee, 1960a, 1960b, 1961, 1962). The first assessment of cultural resources on Virginius Island occurred in the mid-1960s (Hannah, n.d.). Above-ground historical features were described with the intent of reconstruction and stabilization to the "1859 to 1865 period of Virginius Island."

In 1966-68, the Job Corps assisted with additional excavations. Archaeologists uncovered the foundation walls of the large cotton/flour mill ruin and opened part of the raceway on the north side of the mill. Archaeologists also recovered flour-milling machinery parts near the base of the deep excavations and they are currently on display at the industry museum at the national park (Hannah, 1969). A second, somewhat more detailed assessment of existing cultural resources on Virginius Island was performed in 1976. The report includes base maps depicting the above-ground ruins (National Heritage, 1977). In 1978, the NPS conducted excavations at the presumed Wernweg's machine shop site, but testing yielded no evidence of that structure. The Wernweg house was also investigated, primarily

to provide information for proposed stabilization (Seidel, 1986, p. 12-14), which did not occur. Archaeologists conducted additional testing around industrial features, such as a canal wall for stabilization purposes (Frye and YoungRavenhorst, 1988; Mueller *et al.*, 1986). As part of the requirements of a cultural landscape design and implementation, archaeologists searched for the location of two industrial complexes, the Lewis Wernweg sawmill (Borden, 1995) and Lewis Wernweg machine shop (Parsons, 1995).

The archaeology on Virginius Island has not focused on domestic life until recent excavations at three dwellings. Census data show that working-class families comprised a significant proportion of Virginius Island's community. Both enslaved and free African Americans lived and worked on the island before the Civil War, although their jobs and dwelling locations are presently unknown. Women and children did labor in the island's cotton factories. Generally, women, children, and African Americans participated in daily domestic and industrial activities and they made significant contributions to the community's growth (Paltus, 2000). Following are some issues developed from the archaeological investigations that we propose are necessary to expand the interpretation of Virginius Island. We also believe that these issues also serve as a foundation for questions and interpretations at other industrial sites. Recent interdisciplinary investigation details pertinent questions related to economic, social, and ideological issues relevant to Virginius Island in particular, and to the nineteenth-century industrialization of the United States in general.

Consumer Behavior, Industrial Development and Worker Relations

A review of many documents on Virginius Island's businesses and technology exists (Bergstresser, 1988). However, the material culture remains from domestic sites allows us to explore the interrelationship of industry and everyday material practices and sociality. For instance, the country's growing transportation network and increased consumer production capabilities made more goods available to the Harpers Ferry region during the nineteenth century. Indeed, connections by roads, canal, and railroad reached the area by the 1830s, earlier than many other places in the country. At the same time workers in the United States as well as those on Virginius Island were constantly under pressure to deskill, and artisans and craftsmen lost their trades to factories that could mass-produce goods at a cheaper cost. By the end of the century the working-class lost substantial wealth, as they became an increasingly landless group of people. On Virginius Island all of the working-class residents were renters and by the end of the nineteenth century the owner was an absentee landlord and business owner (Johnson and Barker, 1992; Joseph *et al.*, 1993; Paltus, 2000).

The archeological record of the domestic sites is also very telling of the deskilling of labor, and the spread of consumerism and everyday participation in

a material world of purchased, mass-produced goods. The late nineteenth-century assemblages from Virginus look very different from the earlier assemblages. Analysis of ceramic and glass vessels from late nineteenth-century Virginus suggests homogenization of the community as it embraced mass consumption. In the long term, ceramic vessels reveal a progression in the households that have occupied Virginus Island towards increasing consumerism, and also a certain degree of sameness among the households examined. Some aspects of consumer ideology and the concomitant practices materialized in these goods are visibly resisted. For instance, the necessity of the correct size of plates for a "proper" dinner service appears to have been refused at some sites occupied in the late nineteenth century, while the fact of consumerism, and the underlying social distinction and immobility implied by mass marketing of consumer goods remains intact (Palus, 2000). Barbara Little's (1994, 1997) work best explains this material patterning. She shows through several case studies that the acquisition of ceramics is culturally important in a consumer society, however, social actors may use the materials in different ways and material variations in archaeological assemblages may account for resistance by social actors who are subject to the overt ideological tactics of dominant groups. These concepts are clearly useful in discussing material culture and long-term social change at industrial towns. Over time, working-class individuals appear to select aspects of dominant social behavior that have meaning for them and reject others; however, in embracing the ideology of consumerism, working-class households merely embed themselves in the market economy and reinforce their roles in that economy as objectified individuals empowered to sell their labor in order to survive. They became marginalized and therefore had few if any opportunities beyond the selling of their labor.

Health and Hygiene

Increasing scientific medical knowledge, medical quackery, plus growing belief in personal hygiene and public sanitation were notable characteristics of nineteenth-century life in the United States. As with other categories of consumer goods and services, The Virginus Island project produced data to examine differences and changes in acceptance of and access to doctors, patent medicines, and goods for personal hygiene.

This category of questions also crosscuts ecological topics. Evidence for privies, cisterns, wells, and water or sewer pipes were sought through remote sensing, excavation, and documentary sources. The absence of many of these features provides clues about general health hazards and sanitation practices on the island. Furthermore, samples from an early nineteenth-century privy indicate the presence of parasites, evidence of specific illnesses and general health (Cummings and Puseman, 2000). Faunal remains and macroflora data show the

general lack of dietary diversity among some of the community's earliest inhabitants (Duncan, 2000).

By the late nineteenth century the assemblages contain a significant proportion of medicinal bottles (numbering around 125 individual vessels total from the three sites examined, a quarter of the glass vessel assemblage from this most recent historic context). The majority of medicinal bottles were indeterminate as to whether they contained patent or prescription medicines, though there were a number of bottles that are patent medicine, prescription, and cosmetic or food additive substances. The increase in medicine-related containers may be attributed to the declining health conditions associated with the development of decreasing paternalism and absentee industrialist (Palus, 2000).

There is also a more intense consumption of hard liquor in the late nineteenth century that might represent a relaxing of direct, personal social controls under Savery's ownership of the island. Additionally, the change in ratios of alcoholic beverages may be related to the rise of the Temperance movement in Harpers Ferry and the negative connotations that grew with drinking in public places (Palus, 2000). While Temperance organizations existed in Harpers Ferry in the 1830s, by 1912 they aggressively tried to close local saloons and liquor stores (*Virginia Free Press*, 1831, p. 3; *Virginia Free Press*, 1912, p. 5).

REWRITING THE INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPE

Consumer behavior, work conditions, and health and hygiene are topics that can become part of the official memory of industrial sites that are preserved and interpreted to the public. They are all important stories that help provide a working-class history of any industrial site. It is understandable that many ex-factory workers are happy to see their places of former employment destroyed and removed from the landscape. They feel that their time in the factories was a degrading phase in their life. Preservation and remembering these places is not necessarily their community priority (Shackel, 1996, 2000). For some, the industrial landscape "evokes memories of hard work, community, and resistance to exploitation, ... while for others they represent a past much better forgotten" (Abrams, 1994, p. 29). For instance, in an interview with a former worker from Lawrence, Massachusetts, the former laborer responded that he wanted to forget the days of exploitation (Green, 2000, pp. 57-60). "How beautiful it is to sweetly forget the clubbings of 1912, the jailings of 1919, and the clubbings again of 1931," (quoted in Green, 2000, p. 60). This reaction is telling because many of the industrial site museums throughout the United States promote the importance of industrialization at the expense of the story of the worker. However, the preservation, stabilization and restoration of industrial sites can be useful in interpreting and understanding work and living conditions that people faced in industries. Telling the story of labor's

struggle can make the preservation of industrial complexes more acceptable to a greater portion of the working-class community.

There are few communities that celebrate labor while muting the voice of capital. One example is the post-industrial city of Lawrence, Massachusetts. The official memory of industry in Lawrence is the Bread and Roses Strike of 1912. The strike, led by young women, and followed by immigrants of thirty different nationalities, closed most of the northeast region's mills in an attempt to acquire better wages and improved work conditions. The strike stimulated broader appeals for better working conditions by labor throughout the northeast. Today, the city remembers this labor tradition through a museum that provides a memory of labor strife. While the official history of the United States has a long tradition of emphasizing and glorifying industry and capitalism, Lawrence is an example of a place that remembers the struggle of labor. The city now celebrates the strike with an annual festival.

The Museum of Work and Culture in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, is another significant museum that honors labor. The museum celebrates the city's French-Canadian heritage and interprets the struggles of a new immigrant population that toiled in the factories. The oral histories of factory workers, recollecting the conditions that they faced, are heard throughout the museum. In Woonsocket, organized labor helped to remedy some of the poor conditions workers faced everyday.

The city of Lowell, Massachusetts also embraces its industrial past. The city has placed statues around the town that represent and celebrate the efforts of industrial workers. At Lowell National Historical Park many of the exhibits present a history that includes the story of both labor and capital. One exhibit extols the material benefits of industry, but the exhibit also explains labor strife. Visitors are invited to walk through the mill with earplugs while more than one hundred machines operate simultaneously. The experience is enough to make one realize the strain on the mill girls and later immigrants as they labored ten hours per day.

Virginus Island is a unique place because the history and archaeology encompasses an era when industrialization changed the fabric of Americans' daily lives. Entrepreneurs, craftsmen, and laborers were all affected by the social, political and economic forces introduced by industry. The Virginus Island community is a powerful case that shows how these changes were manifested in the material record for different classes of families and the archaeology has made significant contributions to this story.

The Virginus Island community became a shifting, transient population of unskilled workers, laborers, and their families, especially in the latter part of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Because of the lack of historical documentation it is difficult to say if all of the households examined by archaeologists had a connection to the major industry of the island beyond renting their dwelling

from the company. However, the archaeology of these sites represents working-class families. In most cases there were a number of families that occupied the structures over a given period of time, and these families were part of a larger cultural sphere.

Today Virginus Island is a landscape of ruins. The industrial ruins created by floods and the Civil War served to memorialize Virginus Island's industrial history. Industrial ruins functioned as a conduit to the past by creating monuments to the early industrial era. The commemoration of the industrial phenomenon at the national park as well as in other areas helped reinforce an industrial consciousness, and still serves as a reminder of the "immutable" traditions of industrialization (Shackel, 2000).

While early research and archaeology has focused on the industrial prowess of this community, archaeology has the potential to provide a very different story of Virginus Island. Archaeological questions that focus on the social history of the island allow for us to paint a broader picture of everyday life. However, it is clear that the story of Virginus Island as well as at many other local, national, and international sites does not come solely from professional scholarship. Rather, histories are selected and particular viewpoints are emphasized to create a past that is both factual and yet partial. These histories reconstruct the past and are shaped by present needs. Michael Kammen in *Mystic Chords of Memory* (1991, pp. 3) reminds us that, "societies in fact reconstruct their pasts rather than faithfully record them, and that they do so with the needs of contemporary culture clearly in mind—manipulating the past in order to mold the present." Deindustrialization has meant the dissolution of communities and organized labor. Industrial heritage is about the machine, but it is also about the life, survival, and the recounting of workers' stories about resistance to exploitation. These regionally, nationally, and internationally recognized spaces preserved by government agencies are places to remember, and memorialize.

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