

purpose. In Chapter 2, Bell introduces the theme of “transformation” that continues throughout the book; here, it has to do with the literal process of rendering the cat figure from wood. Readers will learn about South Florida toolkits and items like shell tools and shark teeth. In Chapter 3, Bell considers the Cat’s original purpose primarily through the lens of cat imagery.

Chapter 4 begins a middle section of the book that focuses on archaeological knowledge. Chapters 5 and 6 contain particularly engaging accounts of the Pepper-Hearst Expedition (sponsored by philanthropists William Pepper and Phoebe Hearst) and the excavations that uncovered the Key Marco Cat, including a deep dive into the various connotations of the excavators’ favored term “muck” and an explanation of the extraordinary efforts needed to bring preserved artifacts like the Cat back to Philadelphia and to Washington, DC, in good condition. Bell discusses how much of the record of the site was lost at the same time as artifacts like the Cat were discovered. Indeed, throughout the book we learn that the story of the cat is not finished, and it may never be; some avenues for further research are limited by the circumstances of curation and by the ethics of preservation.

In Chapters 7–9, Bell focuses on the Key Marco Cat as an object to be collected and exhibited. Chapter 8 best demonstrates the author’s passion for the artifact and explains how he became entwined with its history. As the MIHS has grown and developed under his leadership, local residents have remained focused on the Cat’s return to the place where it was found, revealing “the true power of the Cat” (p. 155).

As for that power, at times Bell writes about the Key Marco Cat as something with an inherent energy that captivates and enthralls. This force may result not only from the artistry of the object but also from something more elusive—the Cat’s “charisma” (p. 160). But there is a recursive quality to the artifact’s appeal; Bell acknowledges that the cat’s contemporary symbolism as a cultural icon emerged from history and social context as much as from any intrinsic extraordinary quality. Is the Cat’s true power inherent, contextual, or necessarily both? And what connection really exists between our recent adoration for the Cat and its historical and archaeological significance?

In Chapter 9, Bell acknowledges that we cannot know what the Key Marco Cat meant to its makers and focuses instead on its contemporary importance. For current residents of Marco Island, the cat is uniquely meaningful as a “source of pride and identity” (p. 155). But, in Bell’s narration, even those whose first encounter with the Cat is decontextualized are struck by its aesthetic; this appeal then offers an entry point for public education and outreach. As a symbol, the Key Marco Cat has been transformed in meaning and purpose, and as Bell writes, through this process it has become transformative.

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***Ouachita Mountains Archaeology: Researching the Past with Two Projects in Arkansas.* Mary Beth Trubitt. 2019. Popular Series 6. Arkansas Archeological Survey, Fayetteville. x + 108 pp. \$20.00 (paperback), ISBN 978-1-56349-109-2.**

Matthew J. Davidson

Department of Anthropology, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, USA

The organization and writing style of *Ouachita Mountains Archaeology* effectively relay concepts, methods, and findings that are meaningful and interesting both to archaeologists and the public. The foreword describes how the research presented in the book is the result of a long-term joint research program by the Arkansas Archeological Survey at the University of Arkansas, the Ouachita National Forest, the Arkansas Archeological Society, and other groups. The level of institutional support and the organizational capacity for public archaeology in Arkansas are remarkable.

Chapter 1, “Time and Place,” starts with a concise introduction to the physiographic setting and how its features attracted human settlement and use over time. The reader is then exposed to the different types of sources used by archaeologists: material culture, written records, and oral histories. Throughout the book, examples of each are expertly woven into the chapters. Next is an overview of the region’s history. The chapter concludes by introducing the two study sites discussed in the book: the Jones Mill site, dating from the Middle Archaic through Mississippi periods, and the Dragover site, dating from the Middle Archaic period through the twentieth century. This chapter does an excellent job conveying information to readers unfamiliar with the study area while also keeping them engaged.

Chapter 2, “How Do You Know It’s an Artifact?” introduces the reader to basic archaeological concepts (e.g., artifact, feature, site), types of archaeological material culture (stone, bone, shell), and an overview of how archaeological data are collected. For the nonprofessional reader, these concepts are critical for moving from the focus on artifacts as art objects to how we use them to reconstruct the past. The chapter clearly presents several case studies; for example, how lithic microwear analysis is used to determine function.

Chapter 3, “Ouachita Mountains Foodways,” starts with an explanation of how archaeologists reconstruct foodways using palaeobotanical remains, coprolites, and residues. The remainder of the chapter discusses foodways of Native American groups from Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippi periods as evidenced by classes of archaeological data recovered from Jones Mill and Dragover. The comparison of the two site assemblages illustrates to a broad public how each site has a unique history that can only be reconstructed through careful scientific study.

Chapter 4, “Trade and Interaction,” begins by describing the distribution and procurement of novaculite, turns to the reduction of stone tools at precontact novaculite quarry sites, and finally to how the material would have been distributed across the region by transport or trade. The latter part of the chapter examines lithic reduction sequences, providing lessons on how projectile point types are used to establish both site and regional relative chronologies; it then explains how artifact distributions can be used to understand functional variation across space and time at a site.

Chapter 5, “Pottery and Identity,” illustrates how archaeologists can study pottery for clues about social identity in the past. It starts with overviews of spatial and temporal variation in regional pottery traditions, followed by descriptions of pottery technology, vessel forms, and decoration. Importantly, Trubitt explains how pottery attributes are used to track change over time. Most of the remaining chapter examines how pottery differences can track social identity. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of pottery used in mortuary ceremonies and how the study of such contexts has been (re)shaped by NAGPRA in recent decades. As an aside, it is nice to see that museum collections are considered in this case study because it shows the reader how researchers are actively involved in studying materials in museums for clues about the past.

Chapter 6, “Ouachita Mountains Archaeology: What’s Next?” is more of a summary of the book chapters than a prelude to the future of regional archaeology. Overtures are given to public and tribal involvement as important elements in the future of archaeology. Overall, this book does an excellent job of introducing the reader to the regional geography and history, explaining basic archaeological concepts, and then applying those concepts through case studies from the Dragover and Jones Mill sites. Chapters on foodways, trade, and social identity clearly convey information and insights that are relevant to the public.

*Ouachita Mountains Archaeology* represents several trends the professional community should be aspiring to. First, the site case studies were made possible by a highly developed professional community with strong ties to public, nonprofessional audiences. Trubitt has used this platform to organize a multisite, long-term research program, and the result shines in this book. Second, the inclusion of Native American (here, Caddo) perspectives on and contributions to archaeology is encouraging. We can only hope that books like *Ouachita Mountains Archaeology* will shed light on the potential role of tribal involvement and inspire other regional archaeology communities to continue moving toward true collaborations with Tribal Nations.