

It is tempting to add more to these abbreviated excerpts from McGimsey's gleanings, but these should suggest the variety of the contents of *Teocentli*. McGimsey has also provided "A Master List of *Teocentli* Contributions" for 1926 through 1997 which lists every contributor with the years of their appearances. For anyone fortunate enough to have access to a full set of *Teocentli* this will be a valuable research tool as well as fascinating browsing.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/bha.09205>

Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America's House Museums, Patricia West. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press. 256 pp.

by

David L. Browman
Washington University - St. Louis

The standard works on the origins of the historical preservation movement in the United States are Hosmer's two volumes (1965, 1981). West takes a slightly different approach in this work, using the development of four specific house museums (Mount Vernon, the Orchard House of Louisa May Alcott, Monticello, and the Booker T. Washington National Monument) as foils to by which to develop more of the social context of the respective periods of formation, and the political institutions involved. She argues (p. xii) that "house museums are products as well as purveyors of history", that "house museums are and always have been about politics" and that as scholars we must understand that actual histories of house museums have often been superseded by "creation myths" which have evolved associated with the museums as part of the cultural politics of the context of their formation. This has clear implications for the history of archaeology, not only in terms of the context and worldview of the 19th century development of museum theory, but also in terms of the use of archaeology in the 20th century as part of the myth building process. The 180 pages of text developing this theme are well-documented by 70 pages of supporting notes.

The first chapter reviews the work of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association establishing that property. West argues that Ladies Association success affirmed the social fact that the rescue of "sacred" historic houses was within the proper, domestically based sphere of women's activities. While 19th century women were to know their place, the definition of the house museum as an apical, shared common ancestral home and shared common sacred heritage, situated the political activities relating to establishing it within the realm of acceptable women's domestic roles. The mythologizing associated with Mount Vernon, the development of a romantic narrative lore regarding the house and Washington, began the trend of ancestral creation myths for the nation.

The second chapter deals with the establishment of Orchard House, a house that even at its outset was part of mythologizing, as it memorialized the characters of Alcott's novel "Little Women". In setting up her argument in this chapter, West traces the evolution of the house museum from strictly part of a romanticized American past, to one that involved education purposes, such as the use of the house museum with "period rooms", or, in one sense, the shift from the house museum as purely shrine to its use as a model home. In doing this, West starts out with a brief summary of the "Sanitary Fairs", the popular fund-raising fairs held in many northern cities during 1863 to 1865. The Sanitary Fairs had "curiosity rooms", which included a bit of the cherry tree Washington allegedly

chopped down, or pieces of the frigate U. S. S. Constitution, as well as rooms which were re-creations of colonial kitchens. In some cases these relic or curios rooms became transfigured into the "curiosity cabinets" that later evolved into various regional museums. The purpose of the Sanitary Fairs, in addition to the fund raising for the Union troops through admission prices, was to encourage patriotism by "evoking national loyalty to a mythologized American past" (p. 41). Developing out of these Sanitary Fair "period rooms" were an expanded series of exhibits, culminating in the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition, which included whole colonial homesteads, New England log houses, and the like, where the visitor could take guided tours of the exhibits as well as buying "old time" food. West tracks the evolution of this movement from the growing focus on promulgating national loyalty to manage sentiments of an increasingly polyglot citizenry, which resulted in the development of a series of exhibits linked to "popular patriotism" at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. An outgrowth of this trend was the establishment of groups such as the DAR in 1890. The need for the preservation of a romanticized and mythologized past led to the DAR managing to have preserved and restored more than 250 historic houses between 1890 and 1940.

The Orchard House museum was thus part of a broader phenomenon of "invention of tradition", crafted in large part by women — Orchard House museum was thus a blend of fantasy and reality. This invented tradition relied to some degree upon a recitation of an Anglo-Saxon 'racial' superiority (p. 79); Orchard House and the DAR projects celebrated a mythological Anglo-Saxon American past welded together by hegemonic instrumentalism. Thus Orchard House museum was part of a nationwide pattern of a largely invented Anglo-American past, and the sanctification of certain artifacts associated with that invented past. One result of a new focus on artifacts of this invented past was the development of both the Colonial Revival and the American Arts and Crafts movements in the 1890s. These two movements, as examples of a "racially pure golden age" (p. 79), provided artifacts by which the upper classes could identify themselves as rightful inheritors of political power. As well, this period marked the beginning of widescale collecting of American antiques, resulting in the various museums of historical American culture so critically important to historical archaeologists in their interpretations of 18th and 19th century material culture remains.

The third chapter on Monticello deals with the "masculinization of the historic house museum movement" (p.94). In this chapter, West details the often repeated pattern of males co-opting from females an economically and politically fruitful institution. The 19th century voluntarist women were replaced in positions of leadership in the historic preservation field by college-educated male professionals during the early part of the 20th century. One result of the shift to professionalism was the beginning of a policy of accepting for display only those things proven to be associated with the house owner (Jefferson in the case of Monticello), clashing with the previous popular house museum shrine policies of the past.

The fourth chapter uses the example of the Booker T. Washington Birthplace site as a foil to illustrate the co-opting of the trend from the private sector by the government. This chapter deals with many of the federal government history programs of the 1930s which had the goal of "recreating the dignity of our national past" (p.129). Creating unifying patriotic myths now had become part of the government policy in uniting its citizenry for political purposes. The end of this chapter details the shift from the 1930s to the 1950s to a past now based more upon strictly empirical historical records, and a past also based upon good solid dirt archaeological research, in the final reconstruction of Booker T. Washington's log cabin.

I found the volume a much quicker read than Hosmer's more detailed treatise, and a useful supplement to Hosmer. But particularly in the light of the history of archaeology, I found it extremely useful. I insist in 'context' for my students working in the history of the discipline, but frequently have been satisfied with only with the immediate context in terms of "what were the academics of the day doing or writing" kind of context. Books like West's *Domesticating History* remind us all that context is a nested series of boxes; that to properly understand the context of the development of archaeological ideas, we truly do need to place them on the widest canvas we can.

References

Hosmer, Charles B.

1965 *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States before Williamsburg*, G. P. Putnam, New York

1981 *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949*, University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville.

Glen Canyon: An Archaeological Summary. Jesse D. Jennings, Foreword by Don D. Fowler. University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City. xxiv + 131 pp. Paper, \$14.95 (1998).

by

Jonathan E. Reyman

Illinois State Museum- Springfield

The last few years have seen the appearance of reprints of earlier reports of archaeological field-work, e.g., Pueblo Bonito (1920) by George H. Pepper reprinted in 1996 by the University of New Mexico Press. Now the University of Utah Press has re-issued *Glen Canyon: An Archaeological Summary* by Jesse D. Jennings, originally published in 1966 under the title, *Glen Canyon: A Summary* as University of Utah Anthropological Paper 81 (Glen Canyon Series 31). Whether the re-issuance of earlier reports represents a long-term publishing program or just a short-term fad remains to be seen. The development, however, is a welcome one, especially because many of these earlier reports - long out-of-print- are expensive to purchase and are rarely available. For example, recent asking prices for copies of *Pueblo Bonito* advertised by used booksellers in their catalogs were from \$80-120.

The re-issued Glen Canyon report has a new Foreword by Don Fowler, a revised title that adds the word "Archaeological," and a new, smaller format with changed pagination. The smaller format and a better, clearer typeface make the re-issued volume easier to read than the original. Perhaps I missed it, but there does not appear to be an explanation for the change in title. Fowler states (p. xi), "His Glen Canyon: An Archaeological Summary, now happily reprinted here. .." as though this were the original title, but as noted above, the original title is *Glen Canyon: A Summary*.

As Fowler notes (p. xi), and as Jennings noted (p. xxi), writing the Glen Canyon report was difficult. Jennings stopped and started the writing three times, discarding each previous effort, until he finally