CHAPTER 1

Archaeology and the Seventeenth-Century English Atlantic World

On February 25, 1577, the first vestiges of daylight began to streak across the eastern horizon off the tiny island of Chapera, 1 of 200 islets making up the Pearl Island archipelago in Panama Bay. As he rose and scanned the ocean as part of his morning ritual, forty-year-old Diego de Sotomayor noticed an unfamiliar speck bobbing in the growing daylight. Observing the object as it grew closer, Sotomayor realized that one of his worse fears may have come true. Approaching in a small, open boat was a company of strangers. Sotomayor knew he could not protect his family – his wife, their children, and his wife's parents – if the visitors were English.

As the visitors beached their craft on shore, Sotomayor saw his apprehension realized. The group was indeed composed of fifty "English Lutherans," an Indian, and nine *cimarrones*, or escaped African slaves. As the group approached, its leader, the apparent captain of the crew, demanded that Sotomayor surrender all his gold, silver, and pearls. These men were not just English, they were corsairs, dangerous pirates who harassed Spanish settlements and ships wherever they found them. Seeing resistance as futile and resigned to their fate, Sotomayor and his astonished family reluctantly surrendered a few of their meager possessions, hoping this would be enough to encourage the raiders to climb back into their boat and leave.

But after taking everything the family offered, the invaders began ransacking the family's cabin. Their first target was the few religious books Sotomayor had been able to collect over the years. Finding pontifical tracts, the English captain asked why Sotomayor bothered with such rubbish, for it was well known that the pope was a liar. The Englishman then spat out an obscene name for the pontiff and declared that Sotomayor must stop believing in him. Rummaging further, the Englishman found a book of papal bulls. He roughly asked Sotomayor how much he had been charged

for it. When Sotomayor replied a peso, the Englishman snorted that he had been duped. Did he not know the books were sold only to make money for the Church? The angry invader then ripped the books apart, threw the scraps on the floor, and stomped on them.

At the same time, another Englishman (Sotomayor thought his name was Chalona) found one of the children's lesson books. Thumbing through the book, this man, the raiders' interpreter, could read the words. When he found the Ten Commandments, he read aloud "Thou shalt not steal" and, roundly laughing with the other men, proclaimed that all goods are common property. The raiders' dismissive mockery disappeared, however, when they discovered a book of evangels and epistles. They told Sotomayor to put this book away because, unlike the others, this was a good book and he should treat it well.

Having rooted through the family's small store of religious books, the invaders turned their attention to the family's clothing chests. As the English captain pawed through the garments, he discovered a small box within which he found a crucifix. Angered by this discovery, the Englishman yelled to Sotomayor "Why hast thou this?," and threw the object toward him. The crucifix glanced off a piece of furniture and broke into several pieces. Horrified, Sotomayor quickly gathered up the fragments and quietly hid them. The captain then noticed that Sotomayor had a veronica in a frame. Already angered by the sight of the crucifix, the Englishman demanded to know why Sotomayor had so many gods. The Spaniard replied that the image of Christ on the cloth was not intended to *be* God, but merely an image to remind the family *of* God. The enraged Englishman took the butt of his dagger and struck the image twice in the face. He then slashed it and, tearing it from its backing, threw it on the floor and stomped on it. Sotomayor also gathered up these pieces and secreted them with the broken crucifix.

The English crew next threw all the religious images to the floor and urged Sotomayor and his wife to turn away from the witchcraft of the Roman Church. Saints and friars, sinners like everyone else, were not to be believed.

Having finished ransacking Sotomayor's house and declaring their booty worthy of the queen of England, the invaders stormed across the yard to the house of Juan Manzaneda, Sotomayor's father-in-law. The Englishman's crew proceeded to destroy the altar Manzaneda had built for celebrating mass. They threw its pieces in front of the kitchen door, where everyone would step on them as they moved around the small building. Observing this act of destruction, one of Sotomayor's young sons yelled to the other children, "Boys, let us pick up Holy Mary." An Englishman called the boy

a knave and refused to allow the children near the pieces. Upon finding a vestment for saying mass, the Englishmen's cook put it on, danced around, and ridiculed everything about the Catholic faith. The *cimarrones* laughed at this performance and one proclaimed "I, English; pure Lutheran." Growing tired of his merriment, the cook cut the vestment in half and donned it as a shirt. (Sixty-three years later, English soldiers angered at the spread of Catholicism during the start of the English Civil Wars also donned a surplice and wore it in contempt; see Braddick 2009:100–101.)

The English raiders stayed on the island for many days. They burned all the family's religious images in their cooking fires. When one of Sotomayor's little daughters attempted to save a canvas picture of Mary Magdalene by putting out its flames, one of the invaders ordered her to drop it, calling her a troublesome slut. The invaders ate meat every day and asked with disdain why Sotomayor and his family observed fast days. The English proclaimed that it was not what goes into a person's mouth that defiles, but what comes out of it.

A few days after the original assault on the family, Juan Constantino, a Franciscan friar and a commissary of the Holy Office of the Inquisition, sailed to the island. When he landed, the Englishmen quickly surrounded him, tore off his cap, and jammed a chamber pot on his head. Being a humble servant of the Lord, Constantino responded to this indignity by saying, "So be it, for the love of God." The Englishmen then rudely pushed him into a chair, ridiculed him, and knelt before him speaking a crude imitation of Latin. Sotomayor, aghast at this scene, begged the English not to kill the friar, stating that he was only a cook. The English seemed to repent, but the next day they showed Constantino a wooden cross and asked him what it was. The friar replied that it was the image and likeness of the cross upon which Jesus Christ, Our Lord, was crucified. At this, the Englishman answered, "So, that's where we will hang you and burn you before we go." Showing no fear, the friar responded that he did not merit such an honor, and with this the disgusted Englishman walked away.

The invaders eventually left the tiny island. But before going, they told Sotomayor and his family not to leave because one day they would return to visit them again (Wright 1932:107–112).

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The sixteenth-century Spanish conquest of the vast gold- and silver-rich Native empires in Mexico and Peru propelled the Iberian empire far ahead of little England in the quest for supremacy of the expanding global marketplace

(see Elliott 2006). Northern Europeans cast worried eyes about the world as Spain's international reach seemed to know few limits and its power appeared unstoppable. The sixteenth-century European scramble for control of the world's ever-expanding market saw Dutch, French, Portuguese, and even smaller players like the Swedes and the Danes struggling to gain a foothold in the hierarchy of worldwide power (see, e.g., Hart 2008). But, despite their dreams, even the most optimistic European royal could never hope to gather all the world's peoples under his or her economic and political umbrella. Still, every monarch understood the need to maintain reliable supply routes to the ports they most valued. They deemed these supply chains to be the lifeblood of empire in the post-Columbian world. These supply lines, rather than being just one or two port-to-port links, were in fact a complex "spider web of shipping routes" (Duncan 1972:6). The networks created by each outward-looking nation's rulers, entrepreneurs, and adventurers – as they contested with one another to build geopolitical empires – were the arenas in which individuals and social groups met and interacted in the diverse physical environments of the colonial world. The story of the Sotomayor family was played out in every one of these environments.

Of the many lessons that may be derived from the experience of the Sotomayor family, four stand out as having significant archaeological implications. The first is contextual. The family's story constitutes but a tiny snippet of life extracted from the historical chronicle detailing the struggle between Spain and England for control of Europe's Atlantic World. The Spaniards, in the wake of Columbus's voyages, were the first European superpower to stake a claim to the newly found lands to the west. The English, only developing their transatlantic fever about 100 years after Spain, were able to copy the successes and avoid many of the mistakes of their Iberian rivals (Elliott 2006:xvii). Imitation and adaptation among the royal subjects of both monarchies did not mean, however, that fierce competition and hostile conflict were absent. An archaeological implication thus develops from the conflation of the local and the global, the two spheres of life that collided on Chapera so long ago. The account of the family's troubles, though perhaps merely a historical footnote, constitutes part of the larger story of English–Spanish rivalry. The broad sweep of transatlantic history was composed of thousands of unique stories – taken individually, each is intriguing.

A second key feature of the story is the religious element. The raiders clearly planned to steal material culture when they landed on the island. Theft was their primary object, but their views about religion undergirded their actions. The English and their allies often demonstrated their

contempt for the Roman Catholic faith whenever the opportunity arose. No one can know whether the corsairs at Chapera acted in response to their seriously held religious convictions or whether they simply used their putative Protestantism as a cover for their illegal activities. The salient archaeological point, however, is that economics and religion were significant intersecting vectors figuring into how the contact between the islanders and the visitors unfolded.

Third, events similar in structure to those enacted on Chapera in 1577 were repeated wherever one empire's "spider web" rubbed against that of a rival and caused economic, religious, and political friction. The archaeological lesson is that no matter how fixed the local expressions of empire may seem, they must be understood in their relation to larger issues of cultural and national affiliation.

And finally, the events that occurred between the Sotomayor family and the English "Lutherans" intimately and unavoidably involved material culture. The English and their cohorts did not arrive at Chapera to make the acquaintance of new people; they were there to determine whether the family had anything of value worth purloining. The tale of that family's travails, though a product of a distinct historical time and social context, was also a timeless story of material culture. The story would have little meaning without the lesson book, the crucifix, the chamber pot, and all the objects inspected by the invading Englishmen and their associates.

That the Sotomayors were representatives of the Spanish Empire was a convenient excuse to convert theft into a patriotic act, even though the events occurred eight years before the commencement of the First Anglo–Spanish War.

We may never know the reasons for the pirates' interest in Sotomayor's religious books, but the English may have been able to justify their actions along two lines of thought. As Protestant seafarers, they understood, if perhaps only poorly, the apparent idolatry of the Catholic Church. Their Protestantism told them they should react against it. Coupled with this knowledge, and inseparable from it, was the knowledge that Spain was England's perennial enemy, even in the absence of declared war. Spanish individuals, having committed no wrongs, were still members of the Spanish Empire, and English corsairs were duty-bound to harass them. The actions of the English invaders may also have been perceived as vaguely retaliatory. English seafarers were probably aware that agents of the Spanish Inquisition, in their zeal to uncover contraband, were searching all English ships entering Spanish harbors. Most suspect were the heretical Protestants and their books. Noncompliance with the Inquisition found

more than one Englishman burned at the stake (Games 2008:100). In a strange way, the Englishmen pillaging the tiny island of Chapera may have been reenacting the work of the Inquisition by confiscating and destroying books they found religiously objectionable.

Knowledge in Archaeology

The goal of this book is to investigate the material worlds of the seventeenth-century Atlantic as they were expressed, enacted, understood, and resisted in the English sphere of activity. This is not a history book. Historians of material culture have been able to provide considerable images of the role of material objects in history (e.g., Gerritsen and Riello 2016). Rather, this is a work of social science using a combination of archaeological and historical information. As a work in modern-world historical archaeology – in which archaeological information is the primary source – it constitutes an anthropological study. As essentially anthropological, this study thus represents social science with humanist elements. Today's historical archaeologists, if arranged on a continuum with opposite poles of humanism and social science, would populate the entire spectrum. Many historical archaeologists are almost totally humanist in their approach to the past, while others prefer a more scientific perspective. Many attempt to combine the two approaches. Globally aware modern-world archaeology falls into this last category because its approach shares affinities with the humanistic approach but is social scientific in design. In this sense, the approach adopted here shares affinities with that proposed by James Deetz at the midpoint of his career.

The trajectory of any successful scholar's career is complex and multifaceted, but it seems fair to state that Deetz transformed his thinking about archaeological interpretation throughout his career. Like many of his contemporaries, he was initially drawn to the overtly social scientific approach espoused by New Archaeologists (Deetz 1965). By the end of his career, when he had become one of the world's most renowned historical archaeologists, Deetz had developed into a full-blown humanist (Deetz and Deetz 2000). Little of his earlier self appears in his later works. Where he once wrote about "general theories" and the "patterning of cultural behavior" (Deetz 1968:129), in his book, *In Small Things Forgotten*, he writes from a humanist perspective, even beginning the text with several short, interpretive word pictures of historic individuals who lived in different times and places in early America (Deetz 1977:2–4). Shortly after this book first appeared, and while students and general readers around the

world were celebrating it, his transition to humanism was incomplete. In an often-ignored but meaningful essay, he promoted what he hoped would constitute a middle course between rigid scientific hypothesis testing (often strangely devoid of people) and impressionistic, humanistic images (often lacking concrete data). He termed his approach "scientific humanism" or "humanistic science" (Deetz 1983).

In this book, I have attempted to follow Deetz's mid-career path by attempting to practice scientific humanism, an approach to the study of the modern world that relies principally on empirical archaeological data, but which also incorporates considerable historical information, as well as concepts from anthropology and sociology. Behind this method is the understanding that the subject matter of archaeology is ultimately human beings going about the daily tasks of living life and making history. The goal of the present study, then, is to interpret the actions and activities of past individuals – as humans engaged in the practice of everyday life – in conjunction with acknowledging and understanding the larger forces that impacted and influenced those individuals' actions and thinking.

A central tenet of this study is that all observations are theory laden. The goal of many humanist archaeologists to define specific human actions and sociohistorical contexts as unique – rather than as aspects of broader patterns of behavior – constrains the interpretive powers of historical archaeology by ignoring the macro-level of human endeavor. By reducing all activity to its specificity precludes the construction of social theory (see Fligstein and McAdam 2012:196–198). Equally, however, an exclusive focus on social theory eliminates the human element and reduces all past individuals to programmed automatons. A middle course is thus the preferred path for acquiring the most informed images of the past.

The goal in this book is to analyze and interpret the seventeenth-century English Atlantic World using archaeological evidence as the central source. Abundant historical records exist on the era, though never as many as historians would prefer. Some questions remain frustratingly elusive even from them. When archaeological evidence is considered, the sources are even fewer, more difficult to obtain, and usually fragmentary. The information is locked in the earth rather than behind the archive's doors. Only recently has archaeological research begun to reach the point of maturation to allow the analysis of diverse datasets collected from villages and settlements around the fringe of the Atlantic. Historians have long been familiar with the repositories holding the letters, diaries, official pronouncements, and other pieces of historical writing of most consequence to their research. New knowledge in archaeology advances

when excavators discover and investigate new historical properties or reexamine those excavated by others in the past. The storehouse of archaeological knowledge constantly grows with each excavation. Historians usually reevaluate preexisting evidence with new perspectives to create fresh understandings of the past. Archaeologists do the same, but with the caveat that new evidence is always being unearthed. And as social scientists, archaeologists must evaluate how the new evidence helps refine and reshape, or possibly even refute, accepted theoretical structures.

As followers of a humanistic social science, globally aware archaeologists of the modern world must necessarily concern themselves with how historians work, what they say, and how they collect, evaluate, and employ historical evidence. Historical archaeology would be less meaningful in the absence of textual evidence and the evaluations and interpretations of historians. This is most certainly true when it comes to understanding the Atlantic World at any time during the last five centuries.

Framing the Atlantic World Historically

The concept of an interconnected Atlantic World during early modern history has occasioned considerable scholarship, debate, and contention among historians. Since the concept of "the Atlantic World" was first given explicit expression in the mid-1990s, the number of historians' books, articles, and commentaries on the character, composition, and extent of the Atlantic World – and even its very existence – has resulted in a staggeringly large body of literature.

Professional historians are today investigating the Atlantic as never before, particularly in the realm of social history, a subdiscipline with direct archaeological relevance (see, e.g., Seeman 2010:330; Shammas 2005:1). Many historians, in their efforts to understand the daily lives of history's majority, have been able to construct socially relevant images of the past that were once hidden behind the screens of political and economic history.

The idea of an Atlantic World has had a protracted genesis that began, at least in the USA, during World War I as an effort to comprehend the connections between two of the world's most formidable empires. In a three-year period, journalist Walter Lippman and historian Charles M. Andrews independently considered the consequences and strengths of the connections that tied together Great Britain and the USA. Lippman (1917:60), writing in response to the havoc then being wreaked by German U-boats in "the Atlantic highway," described a "profound web of interest" that joined the "Western world" and "Pan-America" into "one community."

His use of the word "web" is notable because it exposed the concept of network complexity into what ostensibly appeared simply as a connection between two nations. The obvious exception of Germany to that network also indicated that Europe was never a monolithic entity of like-thinking individuals working together for a common goal. Rather, networks were composed of only those polities desiring collaboration. Three years before Lippman's article appeared, Andrews (1914:47) had written in the same vein but confined himself to the past. Describing a British commercial "Atlantic world," stretching "from Hudson Bay to Barbadoes [*sic*]," Andrews also envisioned a web of interaction. Unlike Lippman, though, he included Spain and Portugal in the "Atlantic World."

The wartime alliances between Britain and the USA, combined with a dominant American ideology stressing their linked histories, common language, and shared cultural traditions, made historical associations between the two nations appear entirely natural. For Andrews and Lippman, America's dilemma over wartime intervention was a direct reflection of long-standing links forged between Great Britain and its North American colonies, even though those same colonies eventually sought to sever their connections. At the time both men wrote, the linkages between the two nations had endured from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, with small pauses occurring during the American War of Independence and the War of 1812. The "special relationship" between the two major English-speaking nations continues in the twenty-first century (Coughlin 2010).

Despite the appearance of a few published works mentioning the concept of webs of historical interaction, the contemporary concept of the Atlantic World as a unit of historical analysis only began to take shape after World War II (Bailyn 1996, 2005). One of the most influential books of historical analysis written in this vein was Fernand Braudel's (1972) *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. Despite its impact, historians have yet to reach a consensus about the broad applicability of Braudel's world concept. Bernard Bailyn (2005:4–5) sees Braudel's ideas as not terribly important to Atlantic history because, in his mind, *The Mediterranean* is "*dis*aggregative" rather than consolidative (emphasis in original). Bailyn's two-part criticism is especially relevant to modern-world archaeology. First, he understands Braudel's method as involving the "taking apart" of history in a "poetic" rather than intellectual manner (Bailyn 1996:20). The act of disassembling history's elements allowed Braudel to investigate each element individually, but, for Bailyn, Braudel did not engage in conjoining "the elements of a world" as a discrete unit of analysis. Bailyn perceives Braudel's handling of the individual elements

as too discrete, meaning that Braudel had presented many worlds rather than an interconnected "Mediterranean World" per se. Second, Bailyn argues that Braudel's study is "conceptually meta-historical" rather than historical. This means that *The Mediterranean* is "essentially epistemological not historical." Bailyn thus implies that Braudel was attempting to prove something rather than to allow the documents to lead him forward. Here, Baily astutely and perhaps unknowingly identifies one difference between social science and history. This distinction is integral to understanding the disparities between archaeology as history and archaeology as social science.

Alison Games (2006) is more sympathetic to Braudel's approach. She readily appreciates the difficulties of applying his Mediterranean research directly to the Atlantic. One of the most distinguishing differences she identifies between the two bodies of water is that the Mediterranean is more "coherent" than the Atlantic. The lack of spatial connectivity in the Atlantic means that historians must create the concept of the Atlantic as a single space. Even when doing so, however, the creative act effectively conjoins three strands of historical inquiry (Games 2006:743–744). A growing cadre of contemporary historians is toiling to entwine these threads – analyses of transatlantic slavery, colonial society, and empire – under the general purview of Atlantic history. The unique historical connections between these three avenues of inquiry, and their transformation into a consolidated field of study, have had a lasting impact on historical analysis.

First published in French in 1949, Braudel's monumental work on the cultural history of the Mediterranean has had an impact on archaeological research (e.g., Bintliff 1991), including on the development of modern-world archaeology (Orser 2014:46–51). Braudel provided four of the central concepts employed in modern-world archaeology: a clear broad-scale perspective, the explicit use of a network model, the concept of levels or planes of sociohistorical analysis, and the recognition of the integral social roles played by material objects.

When writing about the Atlantic in *The Mediterranean*, Braudel (1972:224–225) employs a network model that, in substance, is remarkably contemporary. He envisions the sixteenth-century Atlantic as composed of "several Atlantics," each of which was nationally based. Thus, the English, French, Spanish, and Portuguese all maintained "an Atlantic." Like the network model used in modern-world archaeology, Braudel envisions the different Atlantics as composed of a series of internally complicated, interconnected sea routes linking together each nation's outposts, settlements, and fortifications.