

SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES Anthropology

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Matthews, Christopher N. **An archaeology of history and tradition: moments of danger in the Annapolis landscape.** Kluwer Academic, 2002. 162p bibl index ISBN 0-306-46756-9, \$69.95

Archaeologist Matthews (Hofstra Univ.) uses a philosophy of history approach—Walter Benjamin's "moments of danger" concept (times of sociopolitical-economic stress)—to assess the case study of Annapolis, Maryland, and the Bordley-Randall site. In six chapters (three on Annapolitan history), supplemented by five tables, 28 figures, 39 endnotes, eight primary sources (e.g., probate inventories), three newspaper series, and 124 secondary references, Matthews interprets the archaeological record and formation of the record itself as a component through which past traditions were created, altered, and replaced. Mustering archival, historical, and archaeological data, he evaluates Annapolis and the Chesapeake as city, colony/state, and region. This "northernmost of southern cities" began as a self-sufficient tobacco plantation culture, which transformed with the rise of mercantilism. Class formation, effects of the American Revolution, antebellum marginalization, impact of the US Naval Academy, railroad construction, industrial failure, and commodification are salient topics. This provocative, specialized treatise—a revision of Matthews's dissertation and 11th volume in the "Contributions to Global Anthropology" series—contrasts and documents the shared interests of poststructural anthropology and field archaeology, joining other critical histories of archaeological practices (Kehoe, Shanks, Patterson, Trigger, Hodder, etc.). Upper-division undergraduates and above.—*C. C. Kolb, National Endowment for the Humanities*

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