



In Small Things Forgotten: An Archaeology of Early American Life

James Deetz

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History is recorded in many ways. According to author James Deetz, the past can be seen most fully by studying the small things so often forgotten. Objects such as doorways, gravestones, musical instruments, and even shards of pottery fill in the cracks between large historical events and depict the intricacies of daily life. In his completely revised and expanded edition of *In Small Things Forgotten*, Deetz has added new sections that more fully acknowledge the presence of women and African Americans in Colonial America. New interpretations of archaeological finds detail how minorities influenced and were affected by the development of the Anglo-American tradition in the years following the settlers' arrival in Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620. Among Deetz's observations: Subtle changes in building long before the Revolutionary War hinted at the growing independence of the American colonies and their desire to be less like the British.

Records of estate auctions show that many households in Colonial America contained only one chair-- underscoring the patriarchal nature of the early American family. All other members of the household sat on stools or the floor.

The excavation of a tiny community of freed slaves in Massachusetts reveals evidence of the transplantation of African culture to North America.

Simultaneously a study of American life and an explanation of how American life is studied, *In Small Things Forgotten*, through the everyday details of ordinary living, colorfully depicts a world hundreds of years in the past.

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