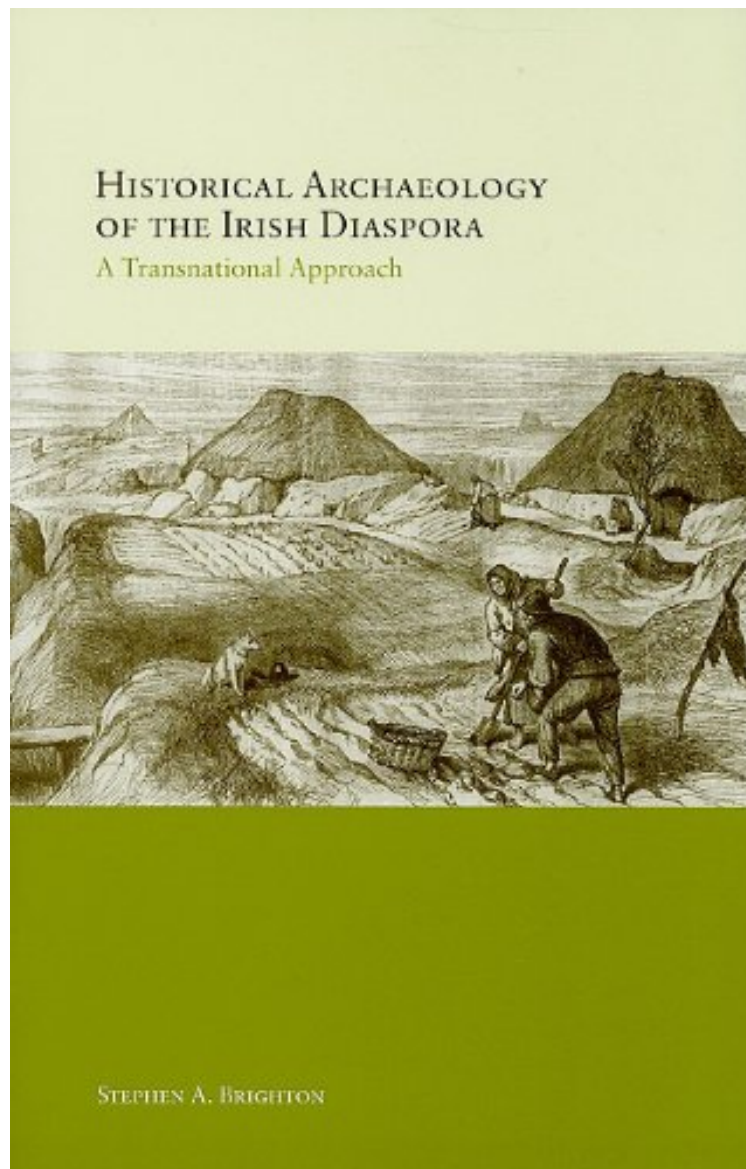


(Read free) Historical Archaeology of the Irish Diaspora: A Transnational Approach

# Historical Archaeology of the Irish Diaspora: A Transnational Approach

*Stephen A. Brighton*

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**Stephen A. Brighton : Historical Archaeology of the Irish Diaspora: A Transnational Approach** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Historical Archaeology of the Irish Diaspora: A Transnational Approach:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. artifacts are clues to Irish experience in America  
By Henry Berry  
An assistant anthropology professor at the U. of Maryland, Brighton employs basic and informative archaeological research and commentary and deductions to the American vein of the Irish Diaspora of the early 1800s; like others in other areas have traced prehistoric migrations. During the 1850s, the Diaspora's height, the Irish population of New York City reached twenty-five percent. Bright adds much unfamiliar, rich detail to this well-known part of the Irish immigration story. And he also adds new dimensions to the story by accounts of New Jersey locations. The Diaspora was precipitated by famine in Ireland between the years 1845 and 1852, a period known as the Great Hunger when the potato crops which were the staple of Irish food failed repeatedly. Irish had a choice between starvation and emigration. The relatively young, growing, and European-based nation of the United States was an inviting destination. The nation accommodated the waves of Irish without really welcoming them. The Irish faced stiff and cruel prejudice by the American public and government, who were almost entirely of English heritage; as the Irish in Ireland were subjected to abuse and hardship by the English ruling class who were mostly offspring of English invaders. This is the sociological and historical backdrop of Brighton's archaeological study. It is generally discussed in so far as it helps to understand differentiating aspects of the Irish diaspora. The Irish diaspora is distinguished as "proletarian"; defined as "composed of individuals without ready capital who remain at and are forced to remain at the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum." These depending on relatively simple skills and clustering together longer do not assimilate so easily; compared to individuals of a "mobilized diaspora" who have advantageous social and economic capital because of their skills, backgrounds, and reasons for emigration. The wealth of archaeological material Brighton assesses is of interest not only for its use in shedding light on Irish migr living conditions in America, but also for how it "unmask[s] the ideologies of a modern capitalist society and how radicalized groups negotiate their status and to track the slow processes [of their] acceptance in the United States." To get such information out of the archaeological remains, Brighton has to develop novel approaches to the subject of the Irish Diaspora as well as the phenomenon of Diaspora in general. With Irish historians debating whether "the Irish dispersal [of the 1850s] should be considered a Diaspora," the author has to provisionally create the ground and framework for the study of an Irish diaspora; then refine this for his illuminations of the Irish immigrant experience in America especially in the New York City area. While scholars may debate some of the author's source material, reasoning, and perspectives, ultimately Brighton extends interpretation of archaeological material beyond its usual focus on local living conditions, influences of other cultures, customs, etc., to involve broader economic, sociological, and historical conditions by a "transnational" comparison of such material.

Anthropologist Brighton (Maryland) offers a historical archaeological investigation of the diaspora of Ireland, reflecting the migration of Irish immigrants to the US during a turbulent period in Irish history from the mid-1840s to the 1850s. Brighton's work is the first to offer a study through an archaeological lens connecting Irish communities spanning two continents and covering four sites: two in Ireland, specifically, in County Roscommon, and two in the US, the Five Points section of Manhattan, New York, as well as the historically Irish community in Paterson, New Jersey. There have been some recent diasporic studies on Irish migrations of the 19th century, such as Catherine Nash's "Of Irish Descent: Origin Stories, Genealogy, and the Politics of Belonging" (2008). However, Brighton's technique is inspired from transnational investigations of the African diaspora to the Atlantic world. This volume can serve as an excellent research tool for students of Ireland as well as diasporic archaeology. Summing Up: Highly recommended. All students of archaeology of the modern world." --B. C. Ryan, Syracuse University, "Choice"  
Between 1845 and 1852, a watershed event in Ireland's history--the Great Hunger--forced more than one million starved and dispossessed people, most of them poor tenant farmers, to leave their native country for the shores of the United States. Further weakened by the arduous voyage across the Atlantic Ocean, many sought refuge in the harbor cities in which they landed. Not surprisingly, Irish immigrants counted as one quarter of New York City's population during the 1850s. In *Historical Archaeology of the Irish Diaspora*, Stephen A. Brighton places Irish and Irish American material culture within a broad historical context, including the waves of immigration that preceded the Famine and the development of the Irish American communities that followed it. He meticulously details the archaeological research connected with excavations at two pre-Famine sites in County Roscommon, Ireland, and with several immigrant tenements located in the Five Points, Manhattan, and the Dublin section of nearby Paterson, New Jersey. Using this transnational approach to link artifacts and ceramics found in rural Ireland with those discovered in sites in the urban, northeastern United States, Brighton also employs contemporary diaspora studies to illustrate how various factions sustained a distinct homeland connection even as the Irish were first alienated from, and then gradually incorporated into, American society. With more than forty million Americans claiming Irish ancestry, fully understanding Ireland's traumatic history and its impact on the growth of the United States remains a vital task for researchers on both sides of the Atlantic. Brighton's study of lived experience follows a fascinating historical path that will aid scholars in a variety of disciplines. Stephen A. Brighton is an assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Maryland. His articles have appeared in the *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* and *Historical Archaeology*.

About the Author Stephen A. Brighton is an assistant professor of anthropology at the University of Maryland. His articles have appeared in the *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* and *Historical Archaeology*.