

OBITUARY



JAMES DEETZ
1930–2000

'My interest in historical archaeology, over the last thirty years and more, has been concerned with culture change – how relationships perceived in the designs and forms of different sets of artifacts relate to organizing principles that tie a whole society together, and how, over time, these shift' (<http://ctext.lib.virginia.edu/users/deetz/Plymouth/JDeetzmem3.html>).

Late last year, the world of archaeology suffered an irreplaceable loss with the passing of internationally known anthropologist Jim Deetz. Few can ever reach the status of irreplaceability in any field, but Jim Deetz brought such a unique, insightful and colourful style to his writing and teaching of American historical archaeology that there can be no one to fill the void. Nonetheless, thanks to his work personally with students and his writing, there are many younger American archaeologists working today who are doing cutting edge research. Through his guidance they know how to question conventional wisdom and are not afraid to get into the dirt while doing it. Jim Deetz also set forth theories about ceramics that must be taken into account by curators for generations to come.

James Fanto Deetz was born in Cumberland, Maryland on February 8th, 1930 and was educated at Harvard, receiving his PhD in Anthropology in 1960. During his career he held many prominent academic posts, among them Assistant, then Associate Professor and finally Professor of Anthropology at the University of Santa Barbara, CA (1961–1967); Professor of Anthropology at Brown University,

Providence, Rhode Island (1967–1968); Professor of Anthropology, and Director of the Lowie Museum of Anthropology, University of California, Berkeley (1978–1994 and 1979–1987 respectively); Visiting Professor of New World Studies and then Harrison Professor of Historical Archaeology at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville (1993–1994 and 1994–2000). He also held the post of Honorary Visiting Professor at the University of Capetown (1988–1991) and was for many years involved in the historical archaeology of the Eastern Cape, South Africa.

Jim Deetz is perhaps best known for his longstanding involvement with the archaeology of the earliest English settlements, and especially with the development of Flowerdew Hundred Foundation, in Virginia, and the Plimoth Plantation project, in Massachusetts, as well as with Jamestown Rediscovery. His extensive bibliography includes the classic work, *In Small Things Forgotten*, first published in 1977, subsequently revised and enlarged and still in print; *Invitation to Archaeology* (first published in 1967), and *Flowerdew Hundred: the Archaeology of a Virginia Plantation* (1993).

Deetz died in Charlottesville, Virginia, on November 25th 2000, two days after the Thanksgiving Holiday that he had so much fun endlessly explaining. In his latest book, *The Times of Their Lives*, written with his second wife, Patricia Scott Deetz, and finished just months before his death, he deals once and for all with the Plymouth, Massachusetts, American Pilgrim Thanksgiving myth. His work at Plymouth in the 1960s and 1970s, both as archaeologist and exhibits expert, uniquely qualified him to speak to this subject. He characterizes Thanksgiving as best understood by thinking of Pilgrims as bawdy Elizabethans – who were hearty drinkers, and liked to dance and swear – not the bland, pompous, religious conservatives so often depicted in more traditional American histories.

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William Kelso
Jamestown Rediscovery