The archaeology of San Diego, Texas: memories media and material culture of the site of an irredentist rebellion

Abstract
El Plan de San Diego is the name of an important document in Texas history, but the document and surrounding history is usually discussed with little or no reference to the town of San Diego, Texas, the people who lived there, or the cultural landscape. The Plan de San Diego is an unsuccessful rebellion that is one of the few documented irredentist revolts in U.S. History, it is also a written document calling for return of lands in a multi-ethnic call to arms advocating the recovery of territory by people of Mexican descent in 1915, named for the town San Diego, TX. After the discovery of this Plan, Mexican-Americans were persecuted, violently suppressed, and murdered: 300-5,000 people of Mexican descent died violently following the discovery and publication of the Plan de San Diego in what historians have called the “Bandit Wars”. San Diego, Texas residents and the entire U.S.-Mexican borderlands changed after the discovery of the Plan. My research investigates the political landscape and changes in material and cultural assemblages during and after the Plan, examining how descendant communities retained ties to place and remembered this event in the community of San Diego. Archival research, Historical archaeology and media representations of San Diego explore expose the everyday lives, settlement patterns, and subsistence strategies of the residents of San Diego before and after 1915, showing the material and social effects of the failed rebellion. The socio-political landscape that helped create Mexican-American culture in San Diego is a silenced, violent, and misunderstood chapter of Texas history that shapes the current borderlands and contributes important insights into the study of sites of rebellion and retaliation worldwide.
Although material culture studies cross many disciplines, there are still theories, methods, and perspectives that are firmly located within particular disciplines. It was only with the start of ethnographic fieldwork that the study of the material culture became less important. This bibliography of material culture will not focus primarily upon the study of ethnographic museums (with the exception of the section on Display) but more on the so-called new material culture studies that have developed since the 1980s and that are characterized by combining ethnographic fieldwork and anthropological debate.

Some scholars look at the interplay of material and social phenomena (for example, memorials and the politics of memory; see Meyer); others scrutinize the intersections of material and mental phenomena (as in the study of mentalities; see Con fine); still others study the relation of cognitive and social phenomena (as in conversational remembering; see Middleton and Brown; all this volume). The second level of cultural memory refers to the symbolic order, the media, institutions, and practices by which social groups construct a shared past. "Memory," here, is used metaphorically.