

## Chapter 1. Introduction

Grooming and health artifacts are found in all types of sites and time periods from the days of Mesopotamia to present (Wain 1970:3). These hygienic products bring a personal touch to archaeology and history. While public laws were enacted and social restraints were developed calling for cleanliness in the light of the germ theory in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, individuals had the ability to interpret, resist or adopt whatever hygienic practice they wished behind the closed doors of their water closet. Still, in the rich contents of archaeological sites, the simple products of hygiene such as combs, soap dishes, and toothbrushes, often go unnoticed or become a small section of a larger analysis. Even historical studies, which have the “ability to open up issues and to ask broader questions that no-one else does” (Berridge 2000:1923) in public health, often cannot address more specific issues dealing with health and hygiene, such as how individual families practiced health, because few primary sources to address these issues can be found. Thus, studies of past hygiene and health in archaeology have tremendous potential to yield valuable information.

### Thesis Statement

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, health and hygiene in San Francisco and developing countries changed drastically. While some people generally understood the value of cleanliness, the advent of the germ theory in the 1870s dismissed any doubts hygiene and sanitation practices resulted in better health. Microscopes made it possible to see the culprit germs present on dirty bodies and in the corners of filthy buildings. Thus hygiene

and cleanliness, once a luxury of the rich, became a necessity for all as an urbanizing society faced contagious diseases in increasingly dense cities.

In reaction to these new findings of the medical sciences, cities began enforcing sanitation and waste disposal in urbanized centers where close proximity demanded it. Garbage and waste removal services were begun, municipal water and sewer systems built, and laws were enacted to protect neighbors from unsanitary residents. With these new restraints, city residents felt pressure to change old sanitation and hygiene habits.

At the same time, the age of industrialization and advertising came into full swing. Consumer products, such as those for health and hygiene, were produced in larger quantities and heavily advertised as never before. In the beginning of advertising, companies simply announced the quality of their wares. When this failed to reach their demanding sales requirements, they turned to psychologists and crafted newspaper ads, slogans, and broadsides to make people feel that they absolutely needed their various products to be popular, healthy or beautiful (Ewen 1976).

Thus, peoples' identities were drastically changed as status, morality, and cleanliness were linked to products and behavior, not the individual. To not be a detriment to society, people had to stay clean and cleanliness meant employing very specific products and practices. These new ideals were not adopted overnight by all city residents. How people dealt with, reacted to, and resisted these new pressures reveals individual choice in everyday activities, so often silent to history, that give rise to larger trends in cultural practices.

The purpose of this study is to determine, through the examination of consumer goods, the health and hygiene practices of different households and what impacts, if any,

the presence of disease within the home had on this specific consumer behavior. The data used for analysis was recovered during the archaeological investigation of the San Francisco West Bay Approach project (SFWBA). The archaeological remains consist of grooming and health products associated with households from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century San Francisco. The artifacts will be examined in conjunction with historical documents and compared alongside other household grooming and health collections from the I-880 Cypress Freeway Replacement Project (Cypress) located in west Oakland. Findings from the research questions addressed in this thesis will demonstrate the contribution studies like this can provide to our understanding of historic health, hygiene, and individual choice within the multitude of research avenues remaining.

### Previous Research

Historical archaeology, which is an inherently interdisciplinary field, involves much more than artifactual data and interpretations. For this study on health and hygiene in late 19<sup>th</sup> century, a larger context will be developed. Thus, previous archaeological research in health and hygiene is an important consideration, as well as the work of consumption and consumer choices and an overview of the analytical possibilities of the household and neighborhood scale studies.

### *Health and Hygiene*

Health and hygiene, in today's society, are often so ingrained in common, everyday practices that we fail to recognize them as a cultural construct, or even as an

activity worthy of historical study (Bushman and Bushman 1988:1213). Quite the contrary, concepts of health have been connected to cultural beliefs, evolved through the years, and changed drastically, particularly in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Historians have struggled to explain why these changes took place. While both historians identified culture as a main source of change, Haller (1981:xi) also saw the changing practice of medicine as a contributing factor to the accepted concept of health and Richard Shryock (1953:108), in turn, identified changing “internal logic” as the critical factor within medicine. This internal conflict, characterized by Nancy Tomes (1997:21) as a raging debate in the 1870s, laid the foundation of the medical acceptance of the germ theory by the 1880s. In turn, Martin Melosi (2000:423) described citywide sanitary services, including the new city water supply and wastewater disposal systems, as intimately connected to these current medical practices and understandings of public health. Beyond medical practices, other influences have been identified. Bushman and Bushman, for example, noted the influence of industrialists who “through advertising... propagated faith” (Bushman and Bushman 1988:1238) in various health products.

On the other hand, some historians critically examined the cultural changes of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. As industrialism concentrated populations in large urban centers, historians identified many changes within everyday culture. Sheard and Power described disease and unhealthiness as “practical indicators of the problems and deficiencies of urban life” (Sheard and Power 2000:1). Thus, 19<sup>th</sup> century residents readily noted poor health as a threat to their existence, in addition to problems with family disintegration, dissatisfaction with wage earning, and the pressure of a consumer society, all which branded urban living as unnatural. In response to these threats, Tomes noted that 19<sup>th</sup>

century residents, particularly of the growing middle class, focused on the home as “an important vector of disease” (Tomes 1990:510), vigorously cleaning every nook and cranny to protect their families. But these efforts went beyond cleanliness, as Smyth (1993:64) described, and the home became a place of orderliness, and a sanctuary, in a chaotic world which increasingly did not make sense to a traditionally agricultural people. Thus, as Hoy noted, the growing importance of health and hygiene in the latter 19<sup>th</sup> century reflected “the triumph of middle-class ideals and habits” (Hoy 1995:xiv).

While historians have laid the groundwork of health and hygiene, historical archaeologists have recovered the remains of these changing practices and have the ability to turn a critical eye to health practices in the home, the conclusions of historians, and meanings behind these recovered practices. Studied in a variety of contexts, evidence of health and hygiene ranged from privy architecture to bug remains to medicine bottles. Unfortunately, because their numbers are often small in comparison to other artifacts, health and hygiene specific studies were few and far between. Nevertheless, the variety of these studies was striking. While some have examined the material culture of health and hygiene, others focused on examining the social reform impacts on architecture and biological examinations of parasites and skeletal indications of disease. Each kind of study has focused on different contexts of hygiene, either the individual body, the household or the community.

For health and hygiene, many studies examined architecture of health related structures, such as privies and water sources. Some archaeologists, such as Rosenswig (1999), looked at change over time in the construction methods of privies in New York, while Jansen (1989) and Addyman (1989) examined the changes as they occur in an

entire city's sewer system in India and medieval York, England respectively. Carnes-McNaughton and Harper (2000), working in North Carolina, took the recording of changing construction a step further by developing predictability models to estimate construction dates for privies. However, Ford argued that "it is not possible to establish a specific chronologic timetable" (Ford 1993:12.4) for physical improvements to health and sanitary conditions because the existence of a municipal sewer system did not guarantee its use (Tarr 1975:601). Once more, Howson, while examining a sample of late 19<sup>th</sup> century New York households, determined that "social class had a significant effect on... the infrastructure" (Howson 1992/1993:137).

Many of these studies examined privies as an acceptance or dismissal of community-wide reforms because these privately constructed structures reflect household interpretations of the laws. Sanitary reforms during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century placed limits on the construction of privies including depth and distance to homes and streets. In studies of excavated privy structures, some archaeologists found that residents resisted the sanitary reforms (Scharfenberger 2001:46; Stottman 2000:57) while others found an acceptance of sanitary codes, even as early as the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century (Demeter 1994:18; Heck and Balicki 1998:35). Household sanitary preferences, although often confined to municipal codes, varied from house to house and may have reflected cultural background, occupation, and home ownership (Crane 2000:20; Demeter 1994:19; Scharfenberger 2001:46).

Another focus in health and hygiene studies was biological studies of privy contents ranging from skeletal analysis to archaeoparasitology. These investigations involved analysis at both the household level and the individual. The vast majority of

these types of studies have used archaeoparasitology to identify and interpret the various parasites present in archaeological contexts as a reflection of sanitation, health and hygiene conditions. Reinhard (1994:62), examining parasitism at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, determined that the high numbers of parasite eggs throughout all the studied privies reflected the resistance of the community as a whole to modernizing sanitation. On the other hand, Bain (2001:72), while studying a late 19<sup>th</sup> century site in Québec City, found that steadily decreasing numbers of parasites between 1850 and 1900 reflected residents conforming somewhat to municipal sanitary reforms.

Other studies examined different biological features. Freeth (2002:21) examined the surfaces of human teeth as evidence of oral hygiene practices. Other archaeologists, such as Steyn and Henneberg (1995), who looked for evidence of syphilis in Iron Age Africa, examined the whole human skeleton for evidence of this hygiene related disease. Mrozowski et al. (1989) sifted through the flora and faunal remains excavated from privies of the Boott Mills company town. They found increasing pollen counts from weeds, the presence of rodent skeletons, and gnawed food bones reflected a decreasing cleanliness of the yards behind the boarding houses (Mrozowski et al.1989:310-314).

Lastly, archaeological studies in health and hygiene used consumer goods to look at 19<sup>th</sup> century culture. These studies mainly involved examining households by looking at medicine bottles, toothbrushes, and other various health paraphernalia. In many instances, health and hygiene were addressed more descriptively, while in other instances they sought new understandings which often contradicted historical understandings of the time.

Many archaeological studies involving the material culture of health and hygiene

were more descriptive and supported wide trends. For example, Flynn and McGowan, while studying glass bottles found in a north Illinois farmstead excavation, found that the archaeological record supported the logical conclusion that new technology made more products available to the family and that they were much “more likely to purchase highly perishable products... from local manufacturers” (Flynn and McGowan 2004:7). Carley, while working with early 19<sup>th</sup> century bottles from the Hudson’s Bay Company’s Fort Vancouver, determined that the medicinal tools and treatments present were a “[reflection] of 19<sup>th</sup> century medicine and responses to fever epidemics” (Carley 1981:33). Some studies merely described hygiene and health because they stumbled upon them when other research goals failed, such as with Parrington (1981). Instead of finding plentiful seeds reflecting a space used by the naturalist to store and process unique specimens, Parrington (1981:34, 38) found a late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century deposit of bottles reflecting the popularity of proprietary and patent medicines of the time.

Other archaeological consumer studies went into more depth with regard to health and hygiene. They have sought to make comparisons to other collections in order to determine patterns, strategies of historic people, contradictions to the historical record, and the ideology behind health and hygiene choices. For example, Ketz, Abel and Schmidt (2005) examined a collection of health and hygiene products from a late 19<sup>th</sup> century brothel in St. Paul, Minnesota and compared it to historic public perceptions of prostitute life. They found significantly poorer health conditions among the prostitutes than the public believed (Abel and Schmidt 2005:87). Meyer, Gibson, and Costello (2005) came to a similar conclusion studying a brothel from the same time period in Los Angeles, California. They discovered that the number of grooming and health products

of the brothel was significantly higher than that of their next door neighbors, thus reflecting the cosmetic necessities of their trade and their higher exposure to disease (Meyer, Gibson, and Costello 2005:122). Pykles (2001), who studied a Mormon deposit of medicine and alcohol bottles from the late 19<sup>th</sup> to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in Salt Lake City, Utah, determined that the religious group did not always strictly abide by their code forbidding alcohol and harmful drugs. Greenwood (1996), while examining medicine in a late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century Chinatown in Los Angeles California, determined that the Chinese adopted an eclectic approach to health care by utilizing traditional remedies, consuming patent medicines, and consulting local physicians for prescriptions (Greenwood 1996:116). Taking health and hygiene a step further, Larsen connected the use of baby formulas to blurring of accepted gender roles by “literally [replacing] the necessity of a mother’s physical presence” (Larsen 1994:73). He saw this use of proprietary medicines as either “an inability to participate in, or a conscious resistance” (Larsen 1994:74) to middle class values which increasingly saw them as quackery.

While these studies broke new ground with their interpretations and findings, many health and hygiene questions remain unanswered. For example, how did individual households practice hygiene; what influence did the community and national scientific advances have on these households’ practices; and how did hygiene practices change over time? What kinds of hygiene products were considered basic and what were luxuries? Is there a correlation between the use of hygienic products, such as hair care, versus health products, such as medicine? Does proximity to stores that sell hygienic goods increase the use of these products? What is the relationship between changing city ordinances and personal hygiene?

### *Consumption Studies*

Consumption, as a practice, has always been influential and inherently visible in human society. While some animals are born with their display of status in the form of colorful feathers and ruffs of fur, humans choose to adorn themselves, their homes and surroundings with things. While not all may be aware of this small detail, social structures are built upon it and destroyed with it. After all, no one can deny that the Roman Empire's imposing monuments built with pristine white marble or the Spaniards' conquering the Americas with their shiny helmets plumed with feathers, did not make an impression upon native peoples with these items of consumption.

Other disciplines recognized the significance of consumption long before the establishment of the field of historical archaeology and have sought to determine the origins of consumption in order to better understand the meaning of goods. In 1934, Thorstein Veblen, a sociological economist, examined the middle class and noted that "its differentiation from the general body of the working classes... [can be found in] a new, subsidiary range of duties -- the vicarious consumption of goods" (Veblen 1973:60). Much later, Mary Douglas, an anthropologist, and Baron Isherwood, an economist, described consumption as a tool for communication. More specifically, they believed that consumption was "an integral part of the same social system..., itself part of the social need to relate to other people, and to have mediating materials for relating to them" (Douglas and Isherwood 1979:4).

Others have taken these studies a step further and examined the interaction of people and their goods in order to understand people's dissatisfaction with consumer

society. Douglas and Isherwood noted that despite its use as communication, “goods, work and consumption have been artificially abstracted out of the whole social scheme” (Douglas and Isherwood 1979:4). James Twitchell attributed this to consumers not knowing what objects mean, especially machine-made items, requiring consumers to develop “very powerful ways to add meaning to goods” (Twitchell 1999:12). Once more, Daniel Horowitz argued that these powerful meanings are “so commonly adopted by social critics and social scientists that we do not have a full understanding of [their] emergence in a specific cultural and historical setting” (Horowitz 1985:xi). Thus, these authors have called for studies to reach beyond communicating consumption and to identify “the bare patterns of the relationships which they cover” (Douglas and Isherwood 1979:11) in order to understand the cultural reasoning behind our ever-growing list of needs (Twitchell 1999:11).

Consumption studies have changed considerably in historical archaeology from their first appearance. Initially, historical archaeologists examined mostly 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century sites in eastern North America. Consequently, archaeologists considered the region as a ‘frontier society’ so “consumption... was interpreted as reflecting patterns in the availability of goods and resources” (Cook et al. 1996:51). As the range of examined sites broadened, more social variables surfaced which could no longer be ignored. In response, historical archaeologists dealt with the problem of class and ethnicity by considering social status and economic status equivalent. The problem was that socio-economic status was inferred from the male head of the household, while the women’s materials, such as ceramic tableware and cooking utensils, received all of the analytical attention (Cook et al. 1996:51). Consequently, this approach “failed to address why

consumers chose one thing over another” (Cook et al. 1996:51).

As historical archaeologists turned to less extreme answers to the complications of consumption studies, they found the solution in analyzing consumption “as natural phenomena to be explained through models” (Cook et al. 1996:52). These ‘consumer behavior studies’ used quantitative data to “reveal ‘patterns’ of expenditure and by extension of consumption” (Cook et al 1996:52). This multi-disciplinary approach considered anthropology less important than other disciplines and observed that the “focus has moved not merely away from individual acts but has become intentionally disassociated [and] distanced” (Cook et al. 1996:52). Thus, consumption was “not linked to any specific commodity or population segment” (Henry 1991:3). Consequently, Cook et al. argued that while these studies have much to contribute to consumption studies, they also reflected an “unwillingness to directly confront issues of agency” (Cook et al. 1996:52), the “socioculturally mediated capacity to act” (Ahearn 2001:112).

To answer the call for more agency, another set of historical archaeologists believed consumption studies should be “linked to individual, intentional, and communicative acts” (Cook et al. 1996). They argued that there should not be an overwhelming separation between the consumer and the consumed, and that the goal should not be to explain consumption, but rather to understand and interpret it (Cook et al. 1996:52). In order to make these linkages, archaeologists must be concerned with “what things mean and to whom” (Purser 1992:107), which can sometimes be found in the historical documents where people expressed what things meant to them (Cook et al. 1996:52). This research approach is important because “meanings are not inherent [in objects] but rather are ascribed” (Cook et al. 1996:54).

A recent critique of this approach has called for less focus on the individual and the examination of both the consumption and production of consumer goods. Wurst and McGuire argued that focusing on consumer choices as individual decisions brushes over “the underlying social relations of power and control... [and] trivializes human action” (Wurst and McGuire 1999:192-193). Rather, they argued that individuals do not have infinite purchase choices if the social structure does not support it. For example, slaves in early America could not shop at all the stores which whites frequented, nor in some cases could they own guns to hunt for themselves. Conversely, a slave’s social position could open doors to other purchases, such as cheaper pottery, than that which was available to free, upper-class individuals. Wurst and McGuire also argued that consumption and production are “two manifestations of the same thing” (Wurst and McGuire 1999:194), and thus cannot and should not be separated. Their separation associates gender with the realms of production and consumption, specifically by assuming that the male sphere of production is determinant, and thus not in need of investigation (Wurst and McGuire 1999:195). Wurst and McGuire concluded that “the issue is not what people buy, but the social relations that enable and constrain what they buy” (Wurst and McGuire 1999:196).

In historical archaeology, there are currently two main debates in consumption studies. These revolve around the questions of: (1) consumer behavior and (2) bringing to light other factors and variables in consumer studies which archaeologists have failed to recognize previously. Although these categories are addressed in the literature, there are also many interspersed themes such as race, gender, identity, class/ethnicity, dominance/resistance, the consumer-producer relationship, food, buildings, mass-

produced goods, scope, marketplace, social changes, disposal, and methodology in locations from around the globe.

One question historical archaeologists have asked in historical consumption studies is what are the influences responsible for consumer behavior. These archaeologists connected the material culture to social themes. Some connected it to general subjects, such as socio-economic status, cultural background, or household composition. Others examined how decisions were changing in the dynamic and evolving social structure, following characteristics such as changing family structure, distinctions between the classes made with goods, and gender.

Many archaeologists have sought to make connections between the archaeological data and social themes. Although some have argued against such foci and call for more works seeking meaning as discussed previously, archaeologists examining general themes remained strong in the literature. For example, LeeDecker et al. examined three 19<sup>th</sup> century households in Delaware and determined that “consumer behavior is related to household composition, life cycle, and income strategy” (LeeDecker et al. 1987:257), and there were broad variations between consumption patterns within social classes. Seifert (1991), who studied working women’s households from three working class neighborhoods in Washington, D.C., agreed with LeeDecker et al. on the importance of household composition and income, but added household function as an important characteristic to determining consumption patterns. Crane (2000), who examined disposal practices across Washington, D.C. in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, argued that cultural background and home ownership played an important role in the deposition of consumer goods along with occupation. However, it is unclear as to whether Crane addressed the

findings of Adams (2003) who determined that the average disposal of consumer goods occurred around fifteen to twenty-five years after manufacture. Busch (1987), conversely, approached deposition lag by examining reuse. He determined that bottle recycling can be used archaeologically to look at the consumer behavior. Henry, encompassing all of these factors, developed a model of consumer behavior which involved the “four main aspects of consumer behavior: the decision to consume, acquisition, use and post-use” (Henry 1991:4).

Other archaeologists took their studies a step further and examined material culture as intentionally displayed by consumers. Thus, many studies found that consumption practices increasingly involved material goods legitimizing status and challenging class structure (Pendery 1992). For example, Cohen (1986) found that the working class made consumer choices based on the middle class’ past preferences. Thus, despite the best efforts of reformers proclaiming the unsanitary conditions of over-stuffed furniture, the working class bought the furniture without hesitation, because it legitimized the working class’s newfound consumer status. Also, De Cunzo (1987) found fashionable dinner and tea wares, although of a lower quality than the middle class, reflected the occupants’ social aspirations and values. In California, Praetzellis and Praetzellis (1992) examined the material culture of an African-American family and an Irish immigrant family. They found the collection of goods, which were quite similar, as a “testament to mass marketing... [where] products and personal habits that in earlier times were only available to the upper reaches of society were becoming essential components of every respectable household” (Praetzellis and Praetzellis 1992:112-113).

Several studies examined consumer choices resisting the dominant ideology

around them, such as slave plantations (Scott 2001), immigrants subject to acculturation (Janowitz 1993), company towns (Bond 1989), and changing gender roles (Larsen 1994). At the Boott Mills company-run housing, Bond (1989) found that the workers rebelled by sneaking in alcohol (Bond 1989), while Janowitz (1993) determined that Dutch immigrants adopted many New World food products into their traditional recipes. Larsen (1994), while studying the parasitic and proprietary medicine bottles from Harper's Ferry, determined that the material culture represented the "sweeping response to the forces of industrialization and urbanization [which] created a period of negotiation of gender roles and family strategy" (Larsen 1994:76). In this case, Larsen found that the proprietary medicine bottles and a single feeding bottle, reflected a mother's inability to participate in, or resistance, to the middle class ideal of professionalized medicine (Larsen 1994:74).

Despite archaeologists' best efforts, not all consumption is so straight forward or detectable. Bedell (2001) found that the cultural change from an agricultural-based society to a capitalist, consumer society was not complete or sweeping. Thus, while capitalism brought industrial cities and wage labor, not every individual adopted or indulged in the growing consumerism which used goods to display success and worth. Consequently, archaeologists faced problems with conflicting interpretations. Friedlander (1991) found that a 19<sup>th</sup> century New Jersey farmer, although successful in his community, chose to spend his money only on land, livestock, costume and diet, while his home was furnished with only a few chairs, plain tableware and beds. Also, local preferences sometimes resulted in seemingly conflicting material culture. For example, Miller (2002b) found Coca-Cola, a globally distributed soft drink, had a very

different formula in Trinidad, reflecting the local taste for sweeter drinks despite the wider beliefs that high sugar drinks were unhealthy. Interestingly, Miller determined that people maintained local preferences because “inconsistency is an appropriate response to contradiction” which faceless globalization brings (Miller 2002b:260).

Another question debated by historical archaeologists dealt with other factors and variables which are overlooked in many consumption studies. These people, answering the call of previous critiques that consumption studies in the past have been too narrow, identified questions archaeologists need to address, such as scale of analysis, market influences, and social considerations, such as socio-economic influences and ethnicity. Also, these studies took a critical look at how archaeologists view their data and perform analysis in order to address these questions. Through this perspective, long-standing assumptions are revealed and questioned.

Some archaeologists believed that the scale of analysis of consumption studies needed reevaluation. Wilk (1990) argued that the best way to acknowledge all the variables involved in the built environment, including individual choice, is by considering houses as a consumer good. Groover (2003) stipulated that studies need to obtain and examine artifacts from the entire evaluated site through shovel test pits, while other authors think bigger. Carroll determined that the community should be the focus of consumption studies, and argued that it is only through the community that “the links between people, communities, and global networks of exchange” (Carroll 1999:131) can be examined. On the other hand, Lawrence argued that material culture should be examined in a global context to examine the emerging cultural imperialism and better understand “the adaptation and renegotiation that occurs within local contexts”

(Lawrence 2003:21).

Other factors archaeologists have drawn attention to are the complications presented by complex market relations. Crook determined that “market places... facilitated particular consumer strategies” (Crook 2000:25). Thus, supplies available to these markets are of crucial concern to archaeological consumption studies, because they limit consumer choice. Riordan, after testing a geographical model for market distribution, determined that it is possible to study economic changes of the production area from the material culture of a site. He stated that “archaeologists [need to] understand the economic patterns controlling the national market” (Riordan 1985:17) before they can interpret how a site fits into this pattern. This model was retested by Adams et al. in 2001 and was found to be useful for examining the relationship between manufacturers and consumers. Concerned with more local conditions, Purser argued that “understanding local variations [in access to goods] through time” (Purser 1990:378) is a “crucial factor in the historical development of an American consumer society” (Purser 1992:114).

Some authors believed that there are other social influences which need to be considered in consumption studies, such as socio-economic differences and ethnicity. In earlier literature, Henry (1987) determined that socio-economic status involved such factors as family cycle, a household’s economic fortune, external economic conditions, and the durable-nondurable nature of commodities. Praetzellis, Praetzellis and Brown argued that it is necessary to understand middle class consumer behavior before addressing material culture as ethnic materials or determining socio-economic status, because although they were “not necessarily the creators of fashion, the middle class

played a leading role as its generators” (Praetzellis, Praetzellis and Brown 1988:202). Crook, on the other hand, argued that “the life history of goods in the possession of working-class consumers began in an environment of working-class, not middle-class” (Crook 2000:25) and that archaeologists need to reconsider the use of terms such as indulgence or luxury in the context of the working-class. Brown (1999) and Groover (2003:245), on the other hand, suggested that artifact quantity is more important than quality in determining class. Considering temporal differences in collections, Shackel (1998) argued that the fall of classical republicanism and the rise of liberal republicanism should be considered when people use artifacts from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to determine household wealth and its market access. Mullins (1999), bringing another perspective to the debate, suggested that in order to understand class in consumer culture, archaeologists have to acknowledge that labor, consumer space, and social and material privileges are fundamentally structured by race. Yet even here opposition surfaces as Praetzellis, Praetzellis and Brown (1987) argued that there are many conflicts with viewing ethnic groups, such as the Chinese, as one homogenous collection or considering acculturation the one and only direction ethnic groups took. They suggested that archaeologists need to define the demographic character being studied before change can be evaluated and examine independent historical sources, as well as be aware that archaeological expressions of ethnicity and class were greatest during urban settlement change.

While many topics, subjects, and problems with consumption studies have been addressed in the literature, questions remain. Archaeologists have yet to make their work more readily available to others and obtain valuable interdisciplinary discussions. As LeeDecker et al. noted in 1991, archaeologists need to use more universal terms to enable

these discussions. Orser also found himself dealing with disciplines studying consumption who did not recognize the potential offered by anthropology, because “too much archaeological literature is technical and of only minor interest to most non-archaeologists” (Orser 1994:n.p.). Specifically related to consumption studies, the next big hurdle will be to answer the call of Wurst and McGuire (1999; see also Miller 2002a) to study both production and consumption. Also, historical studies should consider the importance of exchange and distribution in determining consumer access.

Archaeologists, especially those involved in historic contexts, should turn a critical eye to the scale of analysis of their research. Should archaeologists examine consumption at the household level, the level of the community as Carroll (1999) suggests or look at the whole world (Lawrence 2003) for potential impacts to their material culture?

### *The Household and Neighborhood*

The household has increasingly been recognized as “an ideal unit of analysis... because manifestations of household behavior are often observable in the archaeological record” (LeeDecker 1994:348). However, despite such enthusiasm, the studies of households have faced many challenges. Even the definition of what constitutes a household is inconsistent and ever changing in the literature. In addition, the neighborhood, a larger scale of study less explored in the literature, faces similar rewards and difficulties.

The household, described as “a fundamental social unit” (Netting et al. 1984:xxii), varies so much from culture to culture that archaeologists have had difficulty leaving its definition broad enough to include all possible situations without lending the term

useless. Generally, definitions of the household described it as an organization defined by its locality (Bender 1967:493; Yanagisako 1979:162). However, criticisms of this definition pointed out that not all households reside under one roof, and likewise, people under one roof do not always consider themselves a household (Beaudry 1984:34; Kramer 1982:673). Another major problem in defining the household is that it is culturally constructed, and consequently, archaeologists and historians have sometimes unfortunately applied their own social constructs to studied peoples (Fischer 1958; Goodenough 1956; Hammel 1965, 1978, 1984:30; Netting et al 1984:xx; Wilk and Netting 1984:1).

In response to these definition issues, archaeologists have devised alternative definitions. Some considered the household as a group of people who “regularly [participated] in activities relating to food production and consumption, and to social reproduction” (Kramer 1982:665; see also Yanagisako 1979:164-165). Others adopted this idea of shared activities, but contended that coresidence was also an important part to the household (Blanton 1994:5; Netting et al. 1984:xx; Yanagisako 1979:164-165). Wilk and Rathje took an economic route and defined the household as “a unit of economic and social cooperation” (Wilk and Rathje 1982:620), while LeeDecker (1994:348) believed that a household is both a center of economic importance and kinship relations.

In developing and using these definitions, archaeologists and historians have critically dissected their own understandings and assumptions, especially surrounding internal relations of the household, as evidence of contradictory household goals surfaced (Wilk and Rathje 1982:20). Some argued that households represented shared beliefs

(Deetz 1982:721), while others argued that they were internally fragmented (Bender 1967:495; Hendon 1996:46; Kruczek-Aaron 2002:174). Furthermore, others contended that the household structure was constantly evolving and sensitive to outside changes (Hendon 1996:47; Kramer 1982:674; Netting 1979). Thus, the household has often been seen as a microcosm of the larger society's set of cultural beliefs, relations, and economic situation (Deetz 1982:723; Hendon 1996:55).

Yet, variations also existed between households. For example, several studies have discovered the importance of the domestic life cycle in household structure. They argued that there is not an ideal household composition, but that rather, the ideal household is merely one stage in the life cycle of the household (Beaudry 1984:31; Fortes 1966:3; Groover 2001; Hareven 2000; Netting et al. 1984:xviii; Yanagisako 1979:168). However, other arguments claimed that there is no linear, uniform developmental sequence (Yanagisako 1979:169). Groover contended that the only two elements of change in the household "are clearly time itself and the family or household cycle" (Groover 2001:42). Moving beyond the household life cycle, Netting et al. identified two sources of variation in households: morphology and activity (Netting et al. 1984:xxviii). Thus, they believed that "some of the confusion about household variation and change [derived] from conflating those two dimensions [their size and kinship composition or generational extent], from not differentiating what households look like (morphology) from what they do (activity)" (Netting et al. 1984:xxviii-xxix).

With all of this conflict and ambiguity, many believed that the scale of the household should not be used (Hammel 1984:40; Needham 1974:44; Yanagisako 1979:200). Yet, with improved data sources and methodology, household studies can

continue to offer much to the fields of archaeology and history. Some of the first steps to overcoming the problems of the household are to be able to define them, which begins with acquiring a broader range of data, including primary documents, historiography, comparative archaeological data, and refining methods for identifying variability in households (Beaudry 1984:29; Kramer 1982:674; Yanagisako 1979:179). In addition, external forces influencing household structure need to be addressed, including municipal laws and economic conditions (Beaudry 1984:31), as well as the determining “the life history of a site” (Beaudry 1999:122; see also Carter 1984; Netting et al. 1984:xxiv). Others believed that, to understand households, requires a large sample size from several different time periods (Netting et al 1984:xxiii-xxiv). Some even suggested that the household must be placed in a larger context, such as the neighborhood in order to take into account economic development, market conditions, the environment, and the larger social context of the household (Beaudry 1984:35; LeeDecker 1994:346; Wilk and Rathje 1982:621).

The neighborhood, another scale of analysis, is a network “as vital to a city as its streets and sewer systems” (Downs 1981:15). Yet, a firm definition is difficult. Hojnacki described the neighborhood as consisting of “two basic sets of elements or characteristics: geographical and social” (Hojnacki 1979:48), but beyond these lie contradiction and confusion (Downs 1981:15; Keller 1968:87, 1982:8). Because they are defined socially, neighborhood identities “[varied] among people and over time” (Godfrey 1988:23), which has led some to simply conclude that “a neighborhood is what the people who are there say is a neighborhood” (Berger and Neuhaus 1977:9).

Nevertheless, placing sites in these larger contexts has great value. Wilk and

Rathje noted that other social groups, such as neighborhoods “have functions that complement, replace or even compete with the household” (Wilk and Rathje 1982:621). Mayne and Murray (1999), using oral and family history, reexamined the archaeological materials from a 19<sup>th</sup> century Australian neighborhood clouded in stereotypes as a slum full of ignorant, dangerous, and directionless residents. By focusing on neighborhoods networks, they found that the people of ‘Little Lon’ were quite industrious, supported each other, and were rather permanent residents. Their work showed that, by connecting internal household activities with the external world, we can consider “broad patterns of cultural process and cultural change” (Beaudry 1984:35) which begins with a “fine-grained understanding of the details of daily life” (Lawrence 1998:2). Through the examination of the household within the context of the neighborhood, this level of detail is achievable.

## Summary

Combining history and archaeology to study individual households’ health and hygiene provides a more complete picture of past practices and how people dealt with the changes around them. While some researchers found complications with aspects of these studies, many problems can be remedied, avoided or addressed as research questions. The subject matter in archaeological studies of hygiene has included a wide variety of contexts, from architecture to archaeoparasitology to consumer goods, while consumption studies tend to focus on the items recovered. Hygiene studies have recognized a strong connection between health practices and changing understandings of individuality. These modifications were inherently connected to increased urbanization

and consumption. Consumer society, which experienced a boom in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, helped people communicate in the changing world. The household is the location of health practices and the smallest consumer unit identifiable archaeologically.