

# Household Archaeology in the Southeastern United States: History, Trends, and Challenges

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**Abstract** This review highlights archaeological investigations of prehistoric and historic households in southeastern North America. There are a number of inherent challenges to the archaeology of households in the region, including generally poor preservation and a long history of relatively insubstantial domestic architecture. An appraisal of the historical development of household archaeology developed slowly in the Southeast, largely in reaction to trends in other areas of the world. Over the last decade, however, southeastern archaeologists have been at the vanguard of the application of new approaches to households. From an early focus on generalizable patterns of domestic activities and behavior, researchers increasingly view households as historical constructs situated within larger landscapes. Prominent areas of concern include enduring issues such as status variation, production, and consumption but also newer themes such as gender, identity and ethnicity, agency and power, and ritual and symbolism. Some of the most innovative studies explore the intersections of these topics. Conceptual and methodological challenges remain, but the household endures as a practical and productive focus of analysis and interpretation for southeastern archaeologists more than 30 years after household research in the area began.

**Keywords** Households · Southeastern United States · Status · Identity · Agency · Ritual · Production

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