

Newsletter



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Archaeological Investigations in the Big Black River Basin: Season 1

From June 2 – 17, 2014, researchers from Mississippi State University (MSU) and the University of Missouri – Columbia (Mizzou) embarked on the first season of an archaeological research project to model prehistoric cultural transmission through the Big Black River basin of Mississippi. These efforts represent the beginning of what will be a long-term project to investigate cultural transmission during the Woodland and Mississippi Periods (ca. 500 B.C. – A.D. 1500) of this region and how demographic changes affected transmission through time. “Cultural transmission” refers to the flow of ideas across space and time. When a new pottery style shows up in an area, is it because people using that style moved in, or local people adopted a “foreign” style, or is it a case of independent invention? Why are some cultural traits readily adopted and others rejected by different groups? How does geography, or human population density, play a role in these processes? Cultural transmission studies in archaeology attempt to answer these questions by studying how material culture changes through space and time.

My research strategy was also shaped by a second objective, which is to gain a better understanding of how differences in sampling affects the various measures of archaeological diversity we routinely employ when assessing archaeological sites for their eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) when such sites are first discovered by archaeologists. How many holes should we dig? How many artifacts should we collect? And how do our decisions affect the outcomes of our work and determine what sites are preserved for further study?

The present article will provide a general overview of our findings during the 2014 field season. I plan to submit a separate article for a future issue of the MAA newsletter detailing our findings in regards to the effects of sampling on measures of archaeological diversity.

The initial seasons of this project will support my PhD dissertation research efforts at the University of Missouri - Columbia. This project received funding from the W. Raymond Wood Fund from the Department of Anthropology, University of Missouri - Columbia and from the School of Arts and Sciences at Mizzou. Special thanks to the A&S Dean Michael O'Brien for his support of this project. I am also indebted to Dr. Janet Rafferty, and the 2014 archaeological survey field school from MSU, for their assistance during this inaugural field season.

The Big Black River Basin

As an archaeological region, the Big Black River basin possesses a number of intriguing qualities related to the interplay of culture and environment. Mississippi's physiographic regions are largely oriented in a north/south manner, with our rivers generally flowing from north to south towards the Gulf Coast. Another way of characterizing this situation is to say that our river basins tend not to connect the western part of our state to the eastern part, or vice-versa. Physiographic attributes such as these have had important influences on the nature of settlement in our state during both the pre-historic and historic periods. The rivers of Mississippi have long provided important avenues for the movements of people, goods and information, and served as important sources of food, freshwater and lithic raw materials

President's Letter

As summer rolls on, many of the state's future professional archaeologists are wrapping up their summer field schools, and in the process of furthering their educations, they're also furthering our knowledge of Mississippi's past.

The Jackson and Gulf Coast Chapters have recently been re-established and are having fairly regular meetings now. If you'd like more information about these chapters, please feel free to drop me a line at thomasreubenjames@gmail.com. The MAA works best when local chapters are the most active, because, naturally, locals know best what's going on in their areas.

October is just around the corner. Get in touch with me and let me know what your plans are for Archaeology Month. We're hoping to have a full calendar this year, and we've just gotten word that the Mississippi Humanities Council has approved our grant for the Expo this year.

The Gulf Coast Chapter is planning an Archaeology Month volunteer excavation at Cedar Lake Island at the site of a large historic sawmill. I'm looking forward to hearing about what's happening in the rest of the state!

Tom James

for the region's prehistoric inhabitants. These characteristics have drawn humans to Mississippi's riverine environments for millennia and have been influential in shaping human settlement of the land. The Big Black River, a tributary of the Mississippi River, is something of a physiographic anomaly as its headwaters begin in east-central Mississippi near the town of Maben, only 45 miles from the Alabama state line, and flow in a southwesterly direction to the Mississippi River, covering more than 150 miles of straight-line distance (Figure 1). This characteristic makes the basin an interesting archaeological region as it provides the opportunity for investigating to what extent the environment of this region shaped the transmission of culture traits between the lower Mississippi River Valley and eastern Mississippi.

2014 Field Season

Our 2014 investigations began at a site recorded by MSU archaeologist Evan Peacock in 1986 on his family's land near French Camp in Choctaw County. At the time the site was recorded only a small general surface collection of artifacts was made, recovering around 30 potsherds, a variety of lithic debitage and a stemmed projectile point that suggested a Late Woodland occupation. In order to effectively model cultural transmission during the Woodland-Mississippi period it will be necessary for me to obtain relatively large pottery assemblages from numerous sites throughout the drainage. Fortunately, a good number of appropriate assemblages have been recovered from the Big Black River basin by past researchers. These assemblages, however, are largely from the lower portion of the drainage. The upper portion, in Attala, Choctaw, Montgomery and Webster counties, represents one of the most poorly understood archaeological regions in the state. Very little archaeological survey has been done in this region and very few intensive site investigations have been undertaken. As a result of this situation it will be necessary to perform survey in this region to discover previously unrecorded sites. Additionally, the relatively few Woodland-Mississippi Period sites recorded in the region will need to be revisited to recover larger pottery assemblages. The Peacock 1

site (22Ch522) was chosen as a site to revisit for the purpose of recovering a larger collection of pottery. As the site is currently located in a largely forested environment, precluding surface collection of artifacts, shovel test pits were chosen as the sampling method. The systematic excavation of 50 x 50 cm test pits on a 10 m grid was undertaken across the site to avoid spatial biasing thereby increasing the likelihood that the pottery assemblage recovered from the site was representative of the site's occupation(s) (Figure 2). These efforts resulted in the recovery of a larger assemblage of artifacts, greatly expanded the site's boundaries and identified the location of a midden-filled pit. The analysis of artifacts is presently underway so no final conclusions have been reached regarding the range of decorative techniques or temperers present in the collection; however, one example of a decorated sherd from the Peacock 1 assemblage is shown in Figure 3. This sherd was recovered from the pit feature (Feature 1) discussed further below. Preliminary impressions of the collection suggest that the majority of the assemblage is lacking in decoration and is dominated by sand and grog tempering.

These attributes are typical of the middle to late Woodland Period of this region, or ca. A.D. 400 – 900. No shell tempering, which would suggest occupation during the Mississippi Period, has yet been encountered.

In addition to sand and grog, claystone is present as a temper type within a good number of sherds. Claystone particles are often difficult to distinguish from grog particles with the naked eye, or even a 10X hand lens, as they are often the same size, shape and color as grog. It seems likely that there may be a history of archaeologists mistaking this material for grog. My approach to ceramic analysis has involved the use of a Bodelin Proscope HR that may be affixed with a 30X, 100X or 200X lens. This allows for a more precise discrimination among inclusions in the ceramic paste. Additionally, acid tests have been used to discriminate claystone from limestone. Acid tests using a dilute (10%) solution of hydrochloric acid have been performed on several specimens to test for the presence of calcite in the particles, which would suggest that the material is limestone rather than clay-

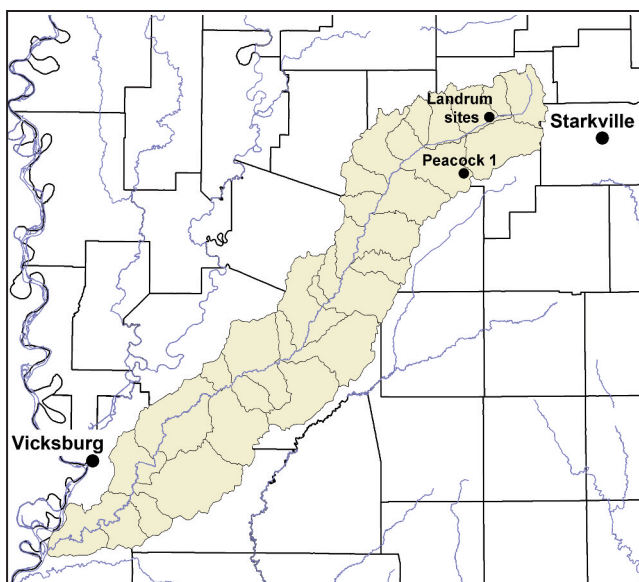


Figure 1. Map showing the locations of the Peacock 1 site and the group of Landrum sites in the Big Black River Basin (in tan).



Figure 2. MSU students recording a soil profile in a shovel test pit.



Figure 3. Decorated sherd from Feature 1 at Peacock 1 site.

stone. If calcite is present then the material should effervesce as bubbles of carbon dioxide are released. None of the specimens tested so far have shown signs of effervescence, which has led to the characterization of this material as claystone. Limestone tempering may be present in the assemblage, but has not yet been encountered. At present, it is difficult to say if the presence of claystone temper will prove to be a chronologically useful attribute, however, this question should ultimately be resolved by this study. When considering the need to construct chronologically useful pottery types, it is encouraging that the possibility of increased variability along the dimension of temper type exists, given that so many of the sherds will likely be lacking in decoration.

Seriation of ceramic assemblages will ultimately provide a chronological ordering of assemblages, however, this will only provide a relative temporal order, rather than the calendrical dating of assemblages that can be accomplished with radiocarbon dating. As a result of this situation, it will be necessary to procure materials suitable for radiocarbon dating from some of the investigated sites. This will allow for seriated assemblages to be anchored to a calendrical time scale. Fortunately, this goal was accomplished at the Peacock 1 site as a midden-filled pit was encountered during shovel testing (Figure 4). Subsequent excavation of the feature recovered its entire contents which included, along with midden soil, large numbers of ceramic potsherds, as well as charred plant material and animal bone. Several pieces of charred plant remains were recovered as radiocarbon samples. These will allow for the Peacock 1 assemblage to serve as an important calendrical anchor, as radiocarbon dating should provide an absolute date for the site's occupation.

After concluding work at Peacock 1, our efforts continued near the headwaters of the Big Black River near the town of Eupora in Webster County. Thanks to the hard work and perseverance of the field school we were able to survey approximately 1,000 acres in the upper Big Black River floodplain and uplands. These efforts resulted in the identification of 15 previously unrecorded sites and a revisit to site 22We511 (Landrum 2). Assemblages of prehistoric pottery were recovered from two of these sites (22We511-Landrum 2 and Landrum 13).

Thanks are due to Craig Landrum and his family for granting access to their land. As with the Peacock 1 collection, analysis is presently underway and no final conclusions are available at this time. Preliminary analysis, however, suggests that the assemblages represent largely early to late Woodland Period occupations as fiber, sand, claystone and grog tempering have been identified. Additionally, temporally diagnostic projectile points were recovered from four of the sites (22We511 - Landrum 2, Landrum 5, Landrum 9 and Landrum 11) (Figures 5-8). A particularly noteworthy find was identified at the Landrum 2 site in the form of a cache of stone artifacts, including the sandstone pestle and broad stemmed projectile point shown in Figure 5. In addition to these artifacts, the cache contained a pitted anvil stone as well as two other fragments of ground sandstone. The broad stemmed point appears to be a heavily reworked Benton point, which would date the feature to the Middle Archaic period (ca. 6500-5500 years ago). The large sandstone artifact appears to be a type of stone pestle that was used for grinding or pounding, as the end shown to the left in the image contains evidence of impact damage consistent with this type of use.

A second season of investigations is planned for the summer of 2015. Essential to the success of this work will be the identification of Woodland/Mississippi Period sites in the region from which ceramic assemblages may be recovered. Additionally, access to land that may be surveyed for previously unrecorded sites will also be important. I would greatly appreciate any leads that can be provided by my archaeological colleagues in the state regarding sites in this region that meet my criteria or permission from any individual to survey land they may own in this region. I may be contacted by email at jeffrey.alvey@gmail.com.

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Figure 4. Photograph of midden-filled pit (Feature 1) at Peacock 1 site exposed in 1 x 1 meter unit.

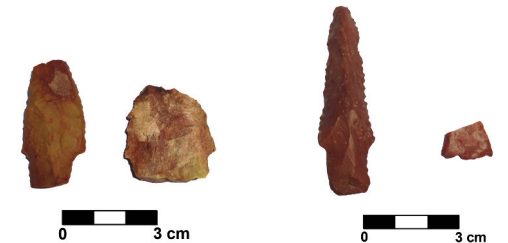


Figure 5. Narrow stemmed point (top-left), broad stemmed point (top-right) and sandstone pestle (bottom) from the Landrum 2 site.

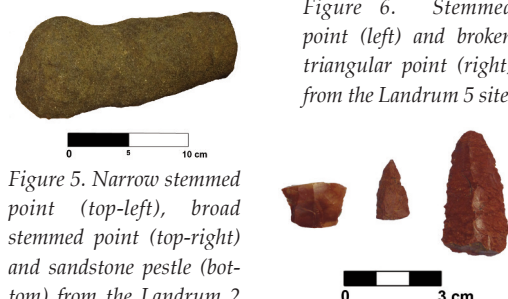


Figure 6. Stemmed point (left) and broken triangular point (right) from the Landrum 5 site.

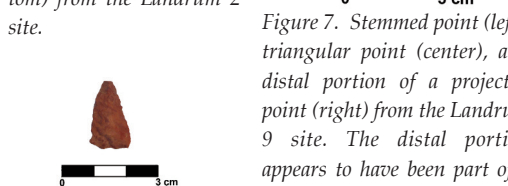


Figure 7. Stemmed point (left), triangular point (center), and distal portion of a projectile point (right) from the Landrum 9 site. The distal portion appears to have been part of a narrow stemmed point similar to the one shown in Figure 6 as the blade size, serration and pyramidal cross sections are very similar.

Figure 8. Triangular point from the Landrum 11 site.

Musings from Jay Mitchell

This morning as I was feeding my dogs at the farm, I thought about archaeology. As some of you know, Ann and I are involved with several animal shelters and are presently caring for eleven dogs that we could not or did not choose to place with new owners. Several of these poor creatures would have been euthanized if we had not taken them.

Some of these animals were feral and had never been socialized by a human owner, yet they seem to know that we had saved them and over a short time became our loving and grateful pets. Being around these (almost wild dogs) has given me an opportunity to observe the metamorphosis from semi-wild to domesticated (with archaeology in mind).

Several years ago I gave a paper at the MAA annual meeting in Natchez; actually it was across the river in Vidalia, La. My paper was on the domestication of the Native American dog. This was one of the most interesting subjects that I had tackled in archaeology. Much of the information was new to many in the audience at that time. Since then the Animal and History channels have made this data more available to the public, with the result that now most everybody knows that *Canus Lupus Familiaris* (our pet dog) is actually descended from *Canus Lupus* (the Gray Wolf).

Here is an observation that I want to share; first, most people have seen dogs go around in a circle before lying down. Experts believe that this behavior is a throwback to wild dogs checking in every direction as well as rounding out a bed in grass or weeds before resting. Everyone knows that dogs love to dig in the ground, for different reasons. Our dogs are divided into separate dog yards for different reasons that I will not go into now, but our feral dogs are separated from the more social animals and I have observed many different behaviors.

Our dog yards are large and spacious with ample shade during hot weather, yet most of our dogs, especially the feral dogs, dig shallow bowl-shaped holes in the ground. It appears this is done to feel the cool earth. Over the summer some dig deeper in the same hole but my ferals move over a bit and dig a new hole. Consequently I have many "shallow bowl-shaped holes or pits" in a confined area. I know that over time these holes will fill in with wind blown material and I wonder what future archaeologists would think about the creation of these features?

In the late 1980s I had the privilege to work for almost three years with John Connaway at the Austin Site in Tunica County. We recorded over three thousand features, many classified as storage or refuse pits. We were not referring to refuse pits as holes dug for the primary purpose of disposing of garbage but because many contained household or kitchen midden. We excavated nine dog burials, which at the time was the most to have been found in Mississippi at a single site; also, these were formal burials, not haphazardly placed refuse.

It seemed obvious that the deep bell-shaped pits were for storage, although many contained only blown soil or fill dirt, but the shallow bowl-shaped pits were a puzzle since most contained no artifacts. I also wondered about the sheer number of them since they seemed to show no purposeful use.

Then the light bulb goes off in my head--- "maybe these shallow holes were dug by the Indian dogs". I don't think that many archaeologists have given much thought to the effect of dogs on archaeological sites. John and I questioned why we found so few deer remains at Austin. These people had the bow and arrow but we found mostly water-fowl, turtles and fish bones. Did the Indian's dogs fight over and take the deer bones outside the site? No doubt dogs on the site served as scavengers and would help keep the site clean. Archaeologists should consider dogs when discussing site formation processes, as they no doubt were a factor.

An Interesting Sea Shell Bead from Lowndes County

In 1985, while an undergraduate anthropology student at Mississippi State University, I embarked on a research project involving triangular arrow points. As part of that project, I revisited a number of sites where such points had been collected in order to increase my sample sizes. Janet Rafferty and I made a collection at 22Lo769, a large, artifact-rich site in Lowndes County. I had the good fortune that day to find a beautiful shell bead, pictured below in Figure 1. The shell is one of a group called olive shells, produced by carnivorous marine snails in the Gulf of Mexico. The species is *Olioa sayana*, the "Lettered Olive," so called because of the scroll-like bands of brown lines that encircle the shell. The specimen from 22Lo769 no longer has the color that doubtless made it quite striking when fresh. As is typical for this type of ornament, the bead was made simply by removing the spire, leaving a hole at the top of the shell through which a string could be threaded, emerging through the long aperture the runs almost the entire length of the bead.

The age of this specimen is not known, as it was a surface find, but similar beads have been found at a number of archaeological sites in the Southeast, especially on or near the Gulf Coast (see texasbeyondhistory.net for a Texas example). The specimen from Lowndes County is a welcome inland example of prehistoric trade, and it is theoretically possible that the shell might be sourced to a particular part of the Gulf through chemical testing. The specimen is held at the Cobb Institute of Archaeology, Mississippi State University if researchers are interested.

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Figure 1. Sea shell bead from site 22Lo769, Lowndes County.

U.S. Forest Service National Forests in Mississippi

De Soto National Forest

Cache: "The store of provisions or a hiding place, especially one in the ground for provisions, treasure, etc."

"Caches are common components of the archaeological record"¹. In Mississippi, mortuary and non-mortuary caches have been found on many sites. Mortuary or burial caches would be meant by their creators to remain undisturbed. On the other hand, non-mortuary caches usually consist of items from the personal gear that would be recovered at a later time. These non-mortuary caches seem to contain unique items like finished beads or completed projectile points. On the De Soto National Forest, generally very common artifacts have been cached.

In 1988, south of Hattiesburg, Mr. Cary Geiger found a disturbed cache of cores or tested pebbles near a new segment of Highway 98. This cache was fortunately on government land, so has been preserved. Four years later, approximately three miles away, another tested pebble cache was found during a small excavation on Forest Service land. This cache produced 26 cores that had one to five flakes removed. Now, after 22 years of not finding a cache, the dry spell is over.

On the De Soto Ranger District, we had our 34th passport-in-time project at a small pre-historic site north of Wiggins, MS. During the second week, Ms. Ernestine Thompson and Ms. Alberta Wodek uncovered a small cache of cores. There were 23 small cores and five flakes that fit back to five of the cores (Figure 1). Two things that should be noted: first is that the flakes were all expedient flake tools with retouched unifacial sides and second that Ms. Thompson was involved in finding the last cache 22 years ago.

Three weeks after the excavation, Ms. Sabrina Wilke found a possible cache of bifaces about two miles west of the excavation on Weyerhaeuser land (Figure 2). There seem to be three different types of bifaces, although they were all found within six by six inch area at about the same depth. The small biface is out of place, but the others could be around the same age.

I hope it's not another 22 years before the next cache is found!

¹Kornfield, Marcel, Kaoru Akoshima, and George C. Frison, "Stone Tool Caching on the North American Plains: Implications of the McKean Site Tool Kit," *Journal of Field Archaeology* 17: 301-309

Robert Reams
De Soto National Forest

A Post-Apocalyptic View of Archaeology

This piece is an updated version of a 2000 essay (<http://www.siftings.com/apocalypse.html>).

I became interested in archaeology when I heard the siren song attracting me to a fascinating world in which the next scrape of the trowel might uncover something that had not been seen for 10,000 years. I use the term archaeology all inclusively. This includes everyone involved in it in any way: amateurs, professionals, specialists, teachers, students, and the general public that follows and consumes what is being reported. This includes the practice of archaeology for whatever reasons: private collections, excavations, test pits, research, environmental impact contracts, etc. I am including everything that is reported by whatever means: meetings, reports, articles, presentations, books, movies, etc.

The inherent nature of the culture of archaeology has changed drastically, and I do not mean for the better. For those of you who do not know me, my life in archaeology began in 1965 at Franklin and Marshall College working with Fred Kinsey. I had the opportunity to gain valuable experience excavating many sites in the Upper Delaware Valley. Fred and I took the opportunity to spend long hours talking about the meaning of the objects and the state of archaeology. I thought that what I saw as archaeology really was what archaeology was supposed to be. Students were encouraged to attend a wide variety of meetings, and all the biggies were there: Louis Brennan, Joffre Coe, William Ritchie, Stuart Struever, James Griffin, Herbert Kraft, Margaret Mead, Marian White, Carl Sagan, Jane Goodall, Richard Leakey, and even the much-feared Bill Gardner. Whoa, wait a minute! Some of these people are not archaeologists. Back in the old days, students were not permitted to specialize until dissertation time. Your education was anthropology and very broadly defined. Going to as many meetings as possible provided access to people who were doing the research, writing the books, and influencing the course of their professions.

I am no longer excavating or doing archaeological analyses. Until 2011 I was editing or doing the production work on 16 books a year: four issues each of *North American Archaeologist*, *Abstracts in Anthropology*, and *A Current Bibliography on African Affairs*, two issues of *Pennsylvania Archaeologist*, and a single issue each of *Journal of Middle Atlantic Archaeology* and *Bulletin of the Archaeological Society of Connecticut*. I also am involved in ghost writing outside of archaeology. In a typical year I will peruse approximately 30,000 articles in 1000 journal titles to prepare the abstracts. I believe I have a detailed overview of what is happening in archaeological and anthropological research around the world.



Figure 1. Cores without the flake tools.



Figure 2. Bifaces.

The current generation of archaeologists has only known one kind of archaeology. A watered-down, neutered, runt of a thing with a face only a mother could love. They assume that the archaeology they have been practicing is what archaeology is supposed to be. What passes for acceptable archaeology in too many places today can best be summarized in a phrase from the film *Young Frankenstein*: "do-do."

Symptoms of the Demise

Public Apathy: Where are the big digs that attract publicity, the eye-catching media displays with tanned, sweaty people troweling dirt in a huge hole and recording their finds? Meadowcroft Rockshelter, the Koster site, and the Templeton site come to mind. But what attracts national attention now? The archaeology of the northeastern United States is virtually ignored by the media. Apparently the national media think nothing worthy of 50 feet of video tape is happening here.

Membership Decline: I see active membership declining in the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology, Eastern States Archaeological Federation, Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference, Archaeological Society of Connecticut, New York State Archaeological Association, and many other groups. As I read over the membership rosters, I recognize many of the names. As a matter of fact, I recognize too many. I ask myself the same question that Count Dracula asks, "Where is the new blood?"

Meeting Attendance Decline: Archaeological meetings are not attracting the number of individuals they once did. I see this as a paradox. With an increasing amount of archaeology being done as a business, too few contracting firms see this as an opportunity to promote their archaeology. For people attending trade shows and conventions in the business world, they are used to seeing professional exhibits, extensive entertainment, hospitality, door prizes, giveaways, etc. In the business world meetings provide an opportunity for promoting companies in a true advertising and marketing sense.

Amateur/Professional Relations: I no longer see the close relationships that used to exist among amateurs and professionals. There always will be individuals who will share information. However, I do not see people taking advantage of venues for information sharing to the degree that they once did. While there are still archaeological meetings and museums, much of the archaeological focus has been removed from the university setting.

Diminished Research Funding: Research funding is stunted. Contract archaeology gets the funding for doing archaeology, but is it really research archaeology? I find it to be quite exceptional when contract archaeology produces meaningful research. Phrased another way, "research archaeology" is redundant, and "contract archaeology" is an oxymoron.

Publication Availability: To update the old philosophical dilemma, "If a tree falls in the forest, and there is no one there to hear it, does it make a sound?" I would ask the question, "If archaeology is done and not reported, has it really been done?" Despite the claim that archaeological information is available in contract reports, are the reports readily accessible to those interested in the research? First, they have to know that the information exists, where to find it, and how

to get access to the place where it is. There are few copies of these reports and few places in which they are available.

Publication Sales: I was in the mail order book business on a very large scale until 1992. I stocked about 600 archaeological and related titles. I knew things had changed when I was searching for new titles to offer and could find only a few. Publishers were letting the classic books go out of print. Universities were deleting archaeology and combining anthropology with other disciplines. I could not find new names for the mailing list. I took the hint and drifted into computer programming and business management consulting. The book business has not improved for me since its peak in 1991 despite my web sites and links to Amazon.com. The back issue sales of journal titles are at their lowest point ever. Over-the-counter sales at archaeology meetings do not even cover the cost of bringing the books.

Causes of the Demise

Legislation: Legislation is a symptom of archaeological problems as well as a cause. In the 1960s archaeologists lobbied for increased governmental supervision of cultural resources. Too much information was being destroyed by federally funded and licensed construction projects. Environmental impact statements with cultural resource oversight on the federal level (NEPA – National Environmental Protection Act) led to state antiquity laws; National Register nominations created local historic districts and led to town-based zoning regulations for archaeological and historical surveys; ARPA (Archaeological Resource Protection Act) makes felons out of artifact collectors on federal land; and NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) has insinuated itself beyond its name. The intended impact of all these and related legislative acts was to increase cultural resource awareness and protection while providing full employment for archaeologists. An unintended side effect has been increased governmental supervision, regulation, bureaucracy, and constituency-pandering. The irony is that cultural resource managers have less political clout than any other element in the equation. They are only the pawns.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA): I can remember Marian White, Hester Davis, and Charles McGimsey promoting archaeological legislation (Public Archaeology). Marian simultaneously pressed for NYAC (New York Archaeological Council) to foster archaeological standards, ethics, and cooperation among all archaeologists working in the state. We were going to get paid to do archaeology. Life could not get any better!

We did not have to wait very long for the downside. The archaeologists had one opinion of how much attention had to be paid to mitigating the adverse effects of "progress" on resources; the developers had another. The bureaucracy almost invariably came down on the side of progress. The bureaucracy is a political arm waving to the crowd to get their attention and to bring the money to them. Developers bring the money, archaeologists delay the process; developers good, archaeologists bad. This situation has improved somewhat by archaeologists getting involved far earlier in the planning process, but I got out before it got better.

The National Park Service audits State Historic Preservation

Offices for compliance with Federal Cultural Resource Management laws and practices. Does the staff possess the necessary qualifications? Do they fairly review pending projects? Do they convene, attend, and react to public meetings? Despite the wonderful intentions of applying and enforcing consistent standards across the US, the National Park Service must abide by one rule: State's Rights. Each state is free to establish its own priorities.

Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA): I never thought that anything could go wrong with this one. Federal lands need protection from people looting kivas, dropping wheelbarrow loads of mound fill into diesel-powered sifters, and mining battlefields for metallic memorabilia. On the other hand, if the archaeological context has already been destroyed because federal agencies are exempt from doing research on fast-tracked projects or the agency never found the resources until they bulldozed the property, I would cut the folks some slack. Only the federal government would find a justification for equating a perfect Mimbres bowl with a flint chip.

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAG-PRA): I have got to admit it. I was wrong again. I can understand why people would be offended at the intentional excavation of a known cemetery. Let the dead rest in peace. The protection aspect should be applied uniformly and consistently. The protection of recognized graves should be all encompassing and not limited to Native American remains found by archaeologists. Note carefully, I am talking about graves and cemeteries.

If a professional archaeologist in the course of an excavation encounters human remains in a Paleo-Indian feature with fire-cracked rocks, charcoal, and debitage, then is this a grave? Creating a grave is an intentional act. Roasting platforms, refuse pits, storage pits, post molds, earth ovens, and a myriad of other features may contain a human bone fragment, but that does not make them graves. If this is a grave, then the associated objects must be grave goods. If these items are grave goods in a burial context, then must we conclude that they were intended to be included in graves when found outside of that context? Be careful, one mis-step and charcoal could be defined as part of a funerary complex.

On the repatriation side I see the loss of valuable research materials that could actually further our understanding of Native American groups. To give up the bones before collecting DNA samples, which could have resolved some of the affiliation or temporal depth issues is a shame. People claiming their ancestor's bones with no tangible evidence will often not permit testing of the only objects potentially supporting (or possibly refuting) their case.

Research vs. Business: The university setting promoted true research, had extensive laboratory facilities, and provided an environment for expertise to be gleaned from an extremely wide variety of specialists. This, coupled with their pipelines to governmental funding, made them the ideal setting for research archaeology. Here was the best opportunity for continuity, long-term research interests, and research of interest to the individuals doing the research. Moving archaeology from the university setting to the business setting happened very gradually. The universities attempted to compete for the

contract dollars, but for the most part did not succeed. Specialized firms could handle large numbers of small contracts far more efficiently than the universities could. The university way of doing things, their overhead, and their other priorities effectively removed them from the contract scene in most areas. Contracting firms accept contracts on a business basis. They do the work because the work is available to be done. They make the bid, get the job done, get paid, and move to the next job. Many contract archaeologists are good archaeologists, who given the research funding, would do research in their areas of interest.

In the best of all possible worlds contract archaeology would be research-oriented, but the reality is quite different. I know of many contract archaeologists working on several projects at once. They simply do not have the time to be directly supervising every aspect of each project from excavation to analysis to interpretation and ultimately to dissemination of the information. If the whole is not greater than the sum of the parts, then a contract report is merely a laundry list of traits tabulated with their weights, counts, and measurements. The contract archaeologist must produce a true synthesis of the artifacts, ecofacts, and their contexts, or this is not really research.

While I am always in favor of efficiency, I see a problem with too much efficiency. Firms who have developed a reputation for rapidly completing Phase I surveys are often stuck in a mechanistic process that compromises the research value of their work. After seeing the same things time after time, one does not expect variation. The background literature search was done once, so it does not need to be done again. Send the crew out, dig the shovel test pits, do the trait list, and crank out the report. Using the prevailing standards for Phase I testing, I would not have bothered with the Faucett or Templeton sites. The type and density of artifacts recovered were unremarkable. Other sites had more variety and higher artifact counts. What made Faucett and Templeton remarkable was context and my gut-feeling developed through experience (Criterion D – likely to yield).

Bad Public Relations: Someday the public will realize that far too much contract archaeology is not producing anything of value. Millions of dollars are being spent on archaeologists to re-iterate what is in their boilerplate cultural summaries and on archaeocrats to read and comment on this work. Are we destroying the incentive for the public to support real archaeological research if they have no perceived benefit from the money being spent already?

Summary

I hope that I have provoked people into re-examining their priorities. I have painted with a very broad brush to make my points, but I do acknowledge the exceptions that only make the generalizations more obvious. Despite my very negative tone, my goal is for people to realize that things have changed and that they should carefully consider new solutions to the problems discussed above.

Roger Moeller

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