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## Introduction to *Perspectives on archaeological resources management in the "Great Plains"*

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## **Introduction**

### **Alan J. Osborn and Robert C. Hassler**

The past two decades of archaeological investigations in the United States have been shaped significantly by cultural resource management (CRM) legislation. Although federal laws designed to protect the nation's archaeological record can be traced to the late 1800s, necessary funding was not made available for extensive work until 1974 with passage of the Moss-Bennett Bill (Judge 1982). The availability of federal monies for archaeological investigations at this time was unprecedented. Marked changes occurred in the discipline of archaeology that involved disruption of the traditional ties linking academic institutions and archaeological research throughout the country (Fowler 1982; Brose 1985).

Patterson (1986: 17-18) describes this period of systemic change and corresponding development of archaeology in the United States:

Universities, which employed many archaeologists from the 1950s to the early 1970s, have provided fewer jobs since then. . . . Federal legislation passed between 1966 and 1974 reshaped the labor market for archaeologists in the mid-1970s. . . . The Historic Sites Preservation Act of 1966, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, and the Archaeological and Historical Conservation Act of 1974, which increased financial support for archaeological research, created conditions for the expanded employment of archaeologists by federal and state agencies. They also led to the appearance of a new class of archaeological entrepreneur, the private consultant. . . . The interests and activities of archaeologists engaged in carrying out the mandates of the federal legislation of the late 1960s and the early 1970s began to diverge from those of their academic colleagues. . . . They formed separate organizations in the 1970s: the American Society for Conservation Archaeology and the Society for Professional Archaeologists. . . .

There are many archaeologists who are unwilling to admit that this intensive period of CRM activity has had a profound impact on our discipline. Yet, we can see that a great deal of CRM archaeology has been conducted outside the sphere of academic institutions where archaeologists have traditionally been trained (Fowler 1982; Patterson 1986). Increased levels of funding stimulated the development of a multitude of private consulting firms and contract archaeology divisions within universities.

Intercommunication between these various organizations was limited or did not exist. The results of many of the CRM projects have not been published in readily available sources and access to unpublished material is limited. Few regional syntheses have been produced based on the past two decades of CRM investigations. Finally, some archaeologists have argued that the advent of contract archaeology retarded or suppressed emerging theoretical changes in archaeology (Keene and MacDonald 1980, 1981; Wobst and Keene 1982).

On the other hand, a tremendous amount of information regarding the archaeological record of the United States has been amassed. This period of CRM archaeology has provided us with an unparalleled opportunity to view vast land areas at a regional level of prehistoric/historic adaptation. Many CRM projects developed research designs that involved the delineation and testing of questions concerning prehistoric behavior patterns, as well as the evaluation of existing anthropological questions.

Archaeologists have recently begun to reexamine the impacts of these developments on our discipline (e.g., Flannery 1982; Judge 1982; Patterson 1986; Meltzer, Fowler, and Sabloff 1986). Recent interest in "critical archaeology" has focused attention on the dynamic interrelationships between the archaeological profession and other components of American society including demographic, economic, and political sub-systems (e.g., Gero, Lacy, and Blakey 1983; Wobst and Keene 1983; Leone 1986). These studies have attempted to delineate the casual linkages between archaeological interpretative frameworks and the political and economic interests of American society (cf. Patterson 1986).

Plains archaeology has been markedly affected by two major periods of federally-funded survey, excavation, and interpretation. The first period of intensive archaeological investigations in the Plains began in the mid-1940s in response to proposed flood control projects along the Missouri River from northern Nebraska to Montana (Lehmer 1971). This work was conducted under the joint cooperation of the National Park Service and the Smithsonian Institution's River Basin Surveys department. More than 800 archaeological sites were located and 200 were tested and/or excavated within the Missouri River basin during a fifteen to twenty year period (Lehmer 1971). Much of the archaeological information collected during this period was organized and subsumed within culture historical frameworks developed by McKern, Willey and Phillips, Spaulding, and Lehmer (cf. Lehmer 1971:25-33). Many of the interpretative conclusions drawn from this period of contract archaeology remain central to Plains archaeology today.

The second period of intensive archaeological investigations in the Plains was initiated in the mid-1970s following passage of the Moss-Bennett Bill in 1974. This archaeological work was carried out in response to numerous development projects including reservoir construction, soil conservation activities, and energy exploration/extraction. In addition, a number of CRM projects have been completed on federal lands such as United States Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management holdings designed for multiple use. At present we do not know how many CRM projects were completed during the past two decades. It is known, however, that in 1981 "...the National Archaeology Program (cost) about \$100 million a year..." (Judge 1981:28). One might argue that a large portion of these funds were expended in the western states, particularly the Great Plains and the American Southwest.

The purpose of this edited volume is to provide an initial glimpse of the accomplishments of CRM archaeology in the Great Plains. The contributions to this volume deal with the methodological/administrative aspects of cultural resource management and also provide archaeological case studies.

Osborn begins the discussion by looking at the theoretical constraints limiting the synthesis and organization of cultural resources archaeology. In part, Osborn calls on contract and academic (full-time vs. part-time) archaeologists to "bury the hatchet" and reunite their efforts to produce professional and cost-effective archaeology. He proposes the utilization of a "research program" to facilitate the achievement of this goal. McGuire echoes Osborn's call to increase the cooperation between consulting and academic archaeologists as a needed relationship to advance archaeology. McGuire notes that the impression that contract archaeologists are the "black sheep" of the profession does a disservice to all constituents.

In the middle of the concern over the quality of cultural resource management archaeology are the public regulatory agencies. These include the many arms of the U. S. Department of the Interior such as the Office of Surface Mining, Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service. State regulatory agencies, the State Historic Preservation Office, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation are also involved in ensuring compliance with the various statutes and rules and regulations. Marceau discusses the difficulties and goals of the Wyoming SHPO as witnessed by a state affected by the boom and bust cycle of private development. Anzalone compliments Marceau's article by outlining what he sees as the basic premises and goals of the federal historic preservation program.

When the initial historic preservation laws were passed they were aimed at guiding the various public agencies in their treatment of cultural resources. During the 1970's laws were enacted which required private industry to participate in the program if any federal or state license, lease or other action was involved. For the mining industry the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977 dictated consideration of cultural resources during mine planning and operations. Hassler recounts the effect of this requirement upon the surface coal mining industry and concludes that the current problems which are disrupting the program can be worked out if professional and regulatory archaeologists do not ignore the concerns of private industry. He further discusses the likelihood that the growth of CRM over the past two decades has ceased and may have only been a "flash in the pan".

Some of the problems faced by private industry in their attempts to comply with the various statutes also surface when public agencies carry out their own program. The National Park Service, the premier agency involved with CRM, for example, has had to work hard to manage their cultural resources, making mistakes and profiting by them at the same time. Calabrese illustrates this in his article.

The variety of projects and research objectives being carried out by archaeologists doing cultural resources work on the Great Plains is exemplified by the collection of articles by Creasman, Fredlund, Ebert et al, Laustrup, Metcalf, Zier et al, and Meyer and Finnigan. Although such studies have produced new insights into Great Plains archaeology, along with advances in archaeological theory and method, the overall effect of cultural resources management upon a state's archaeological resources may not all be beneficial. From a state perspective, Zimmerman, Brooks and Foor examine how contract archaeology has affected the archaeology within their respective states of South Dakota, Oklahoma and Montana. The issues raised about the long term effects of cultural resources management upon North American archaeology hopefully will prove to be catalysts for the further improvement of the program.

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