

# Over Fifty Years of Dam Good Archeology

## An Introduction to the Bureau of Reclamation's Cultural Resources Program

---

**T**he articles in this issue of *CRM* are based on papers originally presented at the 63rd Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology held in Seattle, Washington in 1998. They were part of the symposium, "Over Fifty Years of Dam Good Archaeology," organized to highlight the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's (Reclamation) cultural resource program. Our intent was to have all 11 papers and the discussant's comments presented at the meeting published together; however, not all the authors were able to submit final versions of their papers to *CRM*. Expanded versions of all papers, including the two unpublished papers, are available on Reclamation's web site <<http://www.usbr.gov/cultural/>>. These papers now serve as the framework for planning an exhibit to highlight Reclamation's centennial celebration in 2002.

Reclamation is best known for the dams, reservoirs, powerplants, and canals it constructed in the 17 western states over the past nine decades, as it attempted to accomplish its mandate to reclaim the arid west. These early construction projects were not accomplished without impacts to cultural resources. As you will see in the following papers, the results of these projects have contributed significantly to American archeology in method, theory, and data. Today, although its mission has changed to water management and conservation, Reclamation continues to advance progressive solutions to cultural resource issues through involvement in public outreach programs and proactive strategies for handling such issues as Indian trust assets, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), and collection accountability.

This issue begins with an overview by Wm. Joe Simonds of Reclamation history and its early involvement in cultural resource management. Robert Blasing's discussion of history of federal archeology on Medicine Creek provides information on Reclamation's archeological involvement in the Medicine Creek Valley of Frontier County in south-central Nebraska. This Missouri River Basin project began in 1947 to identify and excavate the many prehistoric occupations that would be inundated by the planned construction of Medicine Creek Dam.

The next paper by Lynn S. Teague looks at the results of the Salt-Gila Aqueduct (SGA) Project that continue to aid in the understanding of the prehistoric Hohokam occupation in central Arizona. SGA was one of three major projects that preceded construction of the 335-mile Central Arizona Project aqueduct that today brings Colorado River water to Phoenix and Tucson.

Next, in "Postwar Partners in Archeology: The Bureau of Reclamation, the National Park Service, and the River Basin Surveys in the Missouri River Basin (1945-1969)," Lynn M. Snyder, Deborah Hull-Walski, Thomas D. Thiessen, and Myra J. Giesen address the partnerships established as part of the River Basin Surveys project. They also discuss some of the major contributions to the profession resulting from "salvage" projects conducted on Reclamation lands.

Moving back to the Southwest, William D. Lipe's "A View from the Lake: The Dolores Archeological Program in the McPhee Reservoir Area, SW Colorado" looks at five of the major contributions to American archeology of the Dolores Archeological Program (McPhee Reservoir area, 1978-85). In "A Retrospective on the Four Corners Archeological Program,"

Warren F.X. Hurley continues a discussion of the Dolores Project, emphasizing the data recovery conducted since the conclusion of mitigation for McPhee Reservoir. Hurley explores how the Dolores Project has redefined the archeology of the northern Southwest.

The changing emphasis in American archeology and cultural resource management is highlighted in papers by G. James West; Kimball M. Banks, Myra J. Giesen, and Nancy E. Pearson; and Thomas R. Lincoln. West discusses how public interpretation of a major archeological project was developed in "New Melones: Public Interpretation of the Archeological-Historical Record." In "Traditional Cultural Properties vs. Traditional Cultural Resource Management," Banks, *et al.*, provide a philosophical approach to understanding what is a cultural resource. They direct their paper to archeologists involved in cultural resource management with emphasis on the impact of recent federal actions on archeologists and Native Americans, and on Indian trust assets. This paper points to the diverse topics now facing federal cultural resource managers. Lincoln's "Off the Back Roads and onto the Superhighway: Reclamation Reports" looks at how archeological data are reported and how changes in technology are changing the way archeologists report their work.

Finally, Francis P. McManamon and Fred Wendorf, two archeologists intimately familiar with the federal archeology program and each with a unique perspective on it, provide concluding comments and insights on the papers. Their synthesis places the papers into a broader national context, yet speaks to the individual importance of each contribution.

"Reservoirs of Resources: Bureau of Reclamation Salvage Archaeology from 1975 to

1985 in Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico—The Palmetto Bend, Choke Canyon, McGee Creek, and Brantley Projects" by Van Button and Bobbie Ferguson and "The Glen Canyon Project" by Alexander J. Lindsay, Jr. are the two papers missing from the original symposium. Button and Ferguson reviewed Palmetto Bend, Choke Canyon, McGee Creek, and Brantley projects and tracked publications from each project. They provide some hypotheses on why important data from these projects remain relatively unknown and unused today. Lindsay discusses the multi-disciplinary studies undertaken in the mid-1960s for the Glen Canyon Project in northern Arizona.

We hope this collection of papers is informative and interesting for individuals unaware of what Reclamation is or what it has done or is doing with respect to cultural resource management. It was our goal, in organizing the symposium and, then, generating this collection of papers, to stimulate further discussion on these topics. Visit Reclamation's CRM web site and read more about our cultural resource program. We would like your feedback, questions, or comments about these papers or about Reclamation's cultural resource program. At our web site, click on "feedback" and share your thoughts; we would like to incorporate ideas on our cultural resources program accomplishments into Reclamation's 2002 centennial celebration.

---

*Myra J. Giesen is a physical anthropologist with the Bureau of Reclamation, Programs Analysis Office, Lawrence, Kansas, and co-guest editor of this issue of CRM.*

*Jon S. Czaplicki is an archeologist with the Bureau of Reclamation, Phoenix Area Office, Phoenix, Arizona, and co-guest editor of this issue of CRM.*

## **SAA Symposium Papers on the Web**

The papers presented in this issue of *CRM* are shortened versions of the papers presented at the 1998 SAA Symposium "Over Fifty Years of Dam Good Archaeology." Readers interested in the full text versions of the papers, as well as information about Reclamation's Cultural Resources Program, are encouraged to visit Reclamation's web site <<http://www.usbr.gov/cultural/>>.