



BRIAN M. FAGAN

# Ancient North America

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF A CONTINENT

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With more than 280 illustrations

 Thames & Hudson

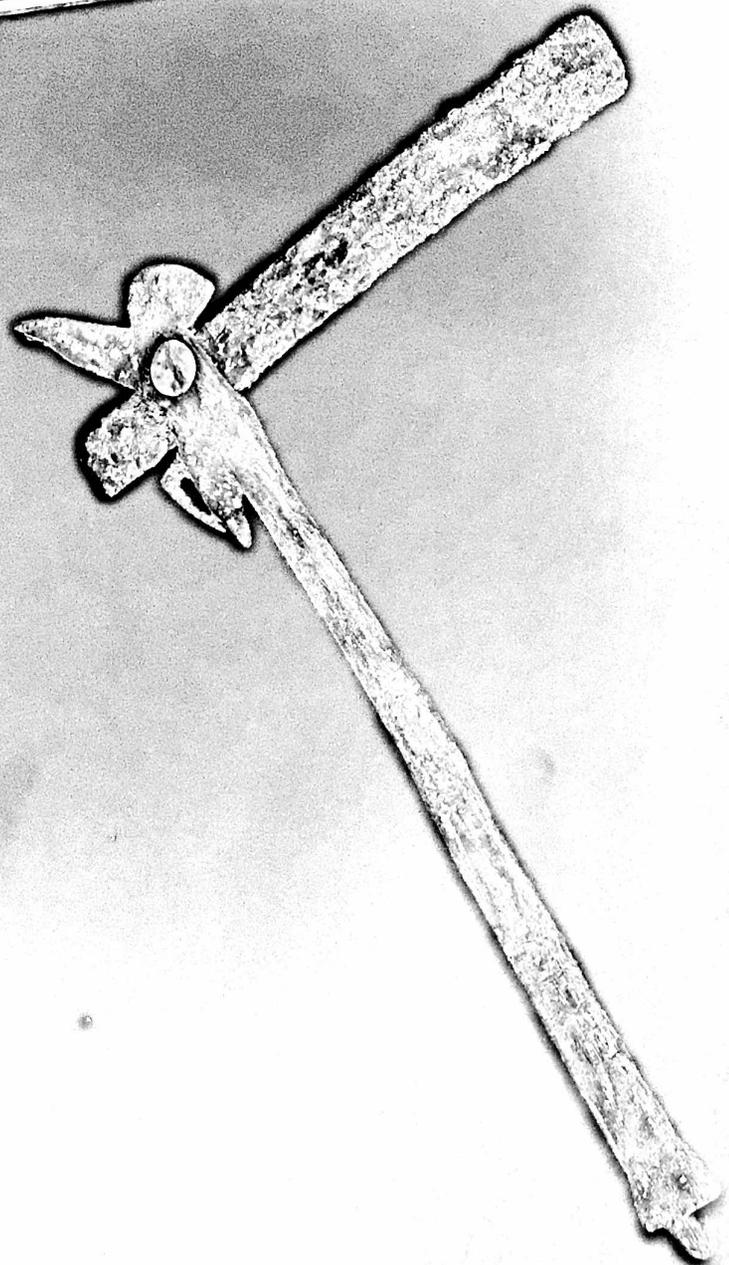
# The Archaeology of North America

PART  
1

*"None of the dead can rise up and answer our questions. But from all that they have left behind, their imperishable or slowly dissolving gear, we may perhaps hear voices, 'which are now able to whisper, when everything else has become silent,' to quote Linnaeus."*

—Bjorn Kurten, *How to Deep-Freeze a Mammoth* (1984)

A Mississippian wooden-hafted axe in the form of a woodpecker, with a copper blade and shell inlay eye. From the Craig Mound, Spiro site, Oklahoma. Length: 14.4 in. (36.5 cm). Dated c. 1250–1350 CE.



# CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF ANCIENT NORTH AMERICAN SOCIETIES

Archaeologists often use three loosely defined cultural terms:  
**Paleo-Indian:** The first human societies in North America, from first settlement to after 8000 BCE.  
**Archaic:** Later hunter-gatherer societies that developed local adaptations after 8000 BCE until about 1 CE.  
**Woodland:** Hunter-gatherer and agricultural societies in the Eastern Woodlands after 1000 BCE.

Dates	Climate	Alaska	West/Southwest	Plains	Eastern Woodlands	Northeast
HISTORIC PERIOD						
Historic	LITTLE ICE AGE			Horse introduced	MISSISSIPPIAN LATE WOODLAND	NORTHERN IROQUOIANS
1500 CE	MIDDLE WARM PERIOD	NORSE THULE	HOHOKAM			
1000 CE		DORSET NORTON	ANCESTRAL PUEBLO	Communal bison hunting	HOPEWELL	
1 CE	LATE HOLOCENE		LATE PERIOD NORTHWEST AND CALIFORNIA	Important maize farming	MIDDLE WOODLAND ADENA	
1000 BCE		PRE-DORSET				
2000 BCE	MIDDLE HOLOCENE	ARCTIC SMALL TOOL	Maize introduced			
3000 BCE						
4000 BCE	ALTITHERMAL (climatic optimum)	ALEUTIAN TRADITION			ARCHAIC SOCIETIES	
5000 BCE						
6000 BCE						
7000 BCE		PALEOARCTIC			LATER PALEOINDIAN SOCIETIES	
8000 BCE	EARLY HOLOCENE					
9000 BCE						
10,000 BCE	YOUNGER DRYAS (cold)			CLOVIS		
11,000 BCE				FIRST SETTLEMENT		
12,000 BCE						

Chronological tables are intended as a general guide only. Not all sites, phases, or cultural terms used in the text appear in these tables. The following key is used throughout the tables:

- Well-established chronology.
  - Time span may continue beyond the line.
  - Limit of the chronology is generally agreed.
  - - - Chronology doubtful.
- CLOVIS A name in capital letters is an archaeological culture, horizon, or tradition.
- Meadowcroft A name not in capital letters is an archaeological site or event.

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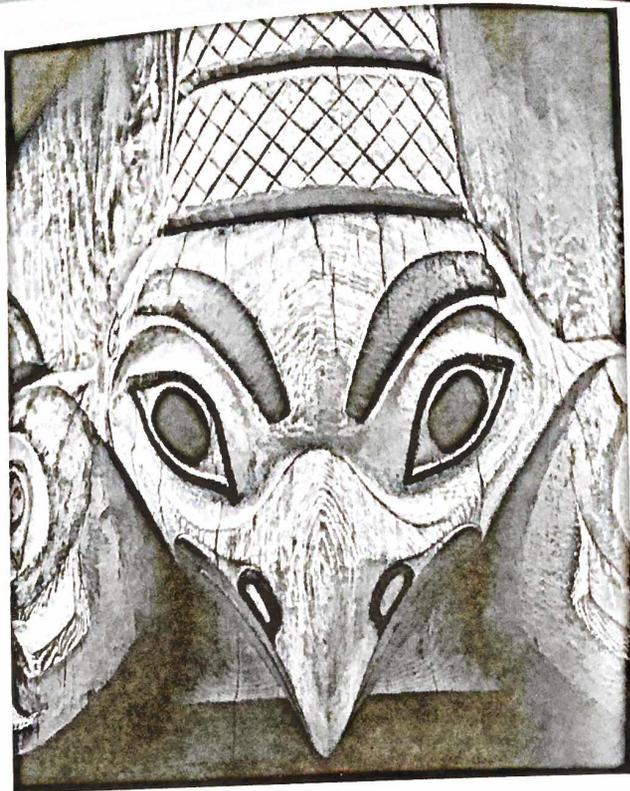
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1.1 Raven carving, Haines, Alaska.



Raven hung the sun in the sky. The sunlight was so bright that he was able to fly to an island far away in the ocean. When the sun set, he placed the moon and stars in the heavens to provide a different light. When he flew back over the land, he dropped all the water he carried, which created freshwater lakes and rivers. Thus part of the Haida creation myth from the Pacific Northwest, its hero Raven, a magical, mythic creature, a trickster, one of the creators of humankind. The Haida believe that Raven discovered the first humans hiding in a clam shell. He brought them beans and salmon. Humankind was created and prospered.

Imagine a dark winter's night inside a planked longhouse on the Pacific shore: the flames of the hearth flickering in the darkness, the families warm in their furs and blankets. An elder tells a story of the beginnings of human existence. His listeners have heard the tale many times, yet it varies with each recitation. Ravens, eagles, and other animal humans come alive as the narrative unfolds (Figure 1.1). The animals are familiar parts of the listeners' world: some are quarry for the pot, some creatures to be feared, all are treated with respect. The storyteller invokes the ancestors (Figure 1.2), those who have gone

before, powerful intermediaries between the familiar living world and the vibrant, sometimes menacing, realm of the supernatural and its powerful beings.

Traditional Native American beliefs and creation stories are rightly treasured to this day. Some of them are thousands of years old and valued by people whose remotest ancestors, we now know, arrived at least 14,000 years ago. This book is the story of these fourteen millennia, told not from oral tradition—although that is part of the narrative—but through Western multidisciplinary scholarship and the lens of archaeology.

## Columbus and After

This scholarship dates back more than five centuries. On October 12, 1492, Christopher Columbus, Admiral of the Ocean Sea, sailing under the Spanish flag, set foot on San Salvador in the Bahamas. There he encountered Native Americans, whom he described as having “very good faces.” Columbus believed he had found the outlying islands of East Asia, and called the inhabitants of the new lands “Indios,” Indians. The admiral and his successors revealed a vast continent teeming with new forms of animal and plant life, and with a bewildering diversity of human societies, both simple and complex.

Who were these “Indians,” exotic people whom Columbus paraded before the Spanish court? Where had these strange humans come from and why were they so diverse? How had they reached the Americas? Had they sailed across a vast ocean, or had they walked? In 1589, Jesuit missionary José de Acosta published his *Historia natural y moral de las Indias*. He theorized that small groups of “savage hunters driven from their homelands by starvation or some other hardship” had taken an overland route through Asia to their present home 2,000 years before the Spanish Conquest of Mexico.

The newcomers had a different take on history from the Native Americans. They grew up in a Europe ruled by royal dynasties, where history was not cyclical, but linear, extending back to the Greeks, the Romans, and beyond into the world of the Old Testament and the Biblical creation. Looking back at the history of the Native Americans meant thinking about their past in the same linear fashion, back to Biblical times and the Garden of Eden.

But had they originated there? When a flood of settlers poured over the Allegheny Mountains in eastern North America after 1815 and cleared farmland, they uncovered entire landscapes of mounds, enclosures, and other earthworks. The newcomers were convinced that golden treasure lay in the mounds and dug to get rich. They found no gold, but dozens of skeletons and exotic artifacts, such as carved soapstone pipes, mica silhouettes of birds and animals, and fine copper ornaments and other objects (Figure 1.3). The finds caused an intellectual furor, and a wave of sentiment for theories of a “lost race” of white Moundbuilders, who had once settled and conquered the fertile lands of the Midwest. Such wild theories appealed to the romantically inclined, to people who believed that Native Americans were incapable of building anything as elaborate as a burial mound (Silverberg, 1968). This gave birth to the Myth of the Moundbuilders with its stirring conquests and flamboyant leaders conjured up by generations of imaginative popular authors (see Box: The Myth of the Moundbuilders).



1.2 Haida mortuary totem poles, Nininstits, Haida Gwaii, British Columbia. The poles are slowly returning to the primordial forest.



1.3 Mica silhouette of a human hand from the Hopewell tradition, c. 300 BCE to 500 CE. Site unknown.

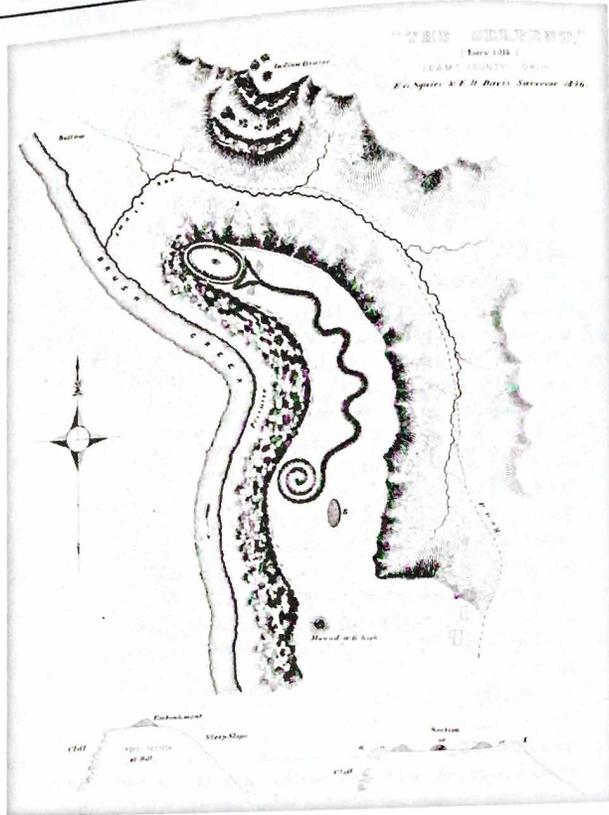
## THE MYTH OF THE MOUNDBUILDERS

The Myth of the Moundbuilders was big business during the nineteenth century. It is a classic example of the kind of pseudo-archaeology that discusses the Lost Continent of Atlantis, ancient visitors from Outer Space, and so on. Popular writers jumped on the bandwagon. Josiah Priest's *American Antiquities and Discoveries in the West* appeared in 1833 and was an immediate bestseller. He wrote of great revolutions and costly wars, when "armies, equal to those of...Alexander the Great" marched into battle. Thousands perished and were buried in great cemeteries. The mound people, reduced by famine and siege, died "amidst the yells of their enemies." Cornelius Mathews's *Behemoth: A Legend of the Moundbuilders* had mound dwellers threatened by Behemoth, a massive, mammoth-like beast. He was killed by an ingenious hero, Bokulla, a heroic warrior. All good, stirring adventure that appealed to people settled in an unfamiliar land, but absolute nonsense scientifically (Silverberg, 1968).

Meanwhile, a few antiquarians set out to acquire more information about the earthworks and their builders. Caleb Atwater, the postmaster of Circleville, Ohio, spent his ample leisure time exploring the mounds near his home town, and described them in a two-part paper published in 1820 that separated observation from pure speculation. Atwater's descriptions are accurate enough, but his theories are a product of his time: migrating Hindus from India had built the mounds, then moved on to Mexico. Just under a quarter-century after Caleb Atwater's report appeared, two Ohio antiquarians, E. G. Squier and E. H. Davis, completed one of the first

1.4 Squier and Davis's exquisite plan of the Great Serpent Mound, Ohio, 1846.

scientific monographs published by the newly founded Smithsonian Institution. *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley* was a comprehensive, descriptive work, with plans that are still used today (Figure 1.4). Squier and Davis's descriptive research was remarkable for the time, but they still referred to the "great race of Moundbuilders," and believed that the Native Americans



and their ancestors were incapable of building the earthworks.

Although most antiquarians believed in exotic Moundbuilders, a growing number of influential scientists thought otherwise. The controversy dragged on from the 1850s into the late 1890s, kept alive by continual amateur diggings and by the publication of often bizarre tomes that added new, and ever more offbeat, chapters to the ancient saga. William Pidgeon, who claimed to be a trader from the west with long experience of Native

Americans, published the *Traditions of Dee-Coo-Dah and Antiquarian Researches* in 1852. His informant was De-coo-dah, a Native American from Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, who told of Moundbuilders overwhelmed by hordes of rapacious natives. De-coo-dah conveniently died before Pidgeon published his secrets that seemed, as one author put it, "Like some monstrous bridge constructed of toothpicks" (Silverberg, 1968).

Meanwhile, however, professional science flourished with the establishment of new universities and colleges, and under the increasing influence of government agencies such as the US Geological Survey. Both the Survey and Harvard University's Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology played important roles in the controversies surrounding Stone Age settlement in North America (Meltzer, 2015).

The Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of Ethnology was founded in

1879, thanks to the lobbying of John Wesley Powell, the first man to traverse the Grand Canyon by boat. The bureau was founded specifically to preserve rapidly vanishing information about Native American peoples in the far west. Under Powell's Directorship, it also embarked on ambitious research programs on a broad geographical scale. Powell moved into Moundbuilder studies because Congress insisted in 1881 that he spend the then-large sum of \$5,000 annually on mound investigation. Forced to sponsor archaeological research, he appointed Cyrus Thomas, an entomologist and ethnologist from Illinois, to head a Division of Mound Exploration in 1882. At first Thomas believed in a "separate Moundbuilder race," but fortunately he realized that he would have to embark on an extensive campaign of survey and excavation, both to support his hypothesis, and to save hundreds of earthworks from

imminent destruction. He and his assistants fanned out over the Midwest, surveying, digging, studying artifacts, and making plans of sites large and small. The steady flow of data from the excavations soon convinced Thomas that the mounds were the work not of a "separate race," but of ancient Native Americans, the ancestors of modern populations. His monumental report appeared in the twelfth *Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology* in 1894; it describes hundreds of sites, thousands of artifacts, and is a pioneering effort at studying the remote past by working back from known modern sites and artifacts as a basis for comparison with earlier cultures (Figure 1.5).

With the publication of Thomas's great work, every serious scholar of North American archaeology accepted that the Moundbuilders were Native Americans. All modern research into these peoples is based on this fact.



1.5 Hopewell tradition stone effigy pipes. Artifacts like these provided Cyrus Thomas with evidence that the earthworks and mounds were the work of Native Americans.

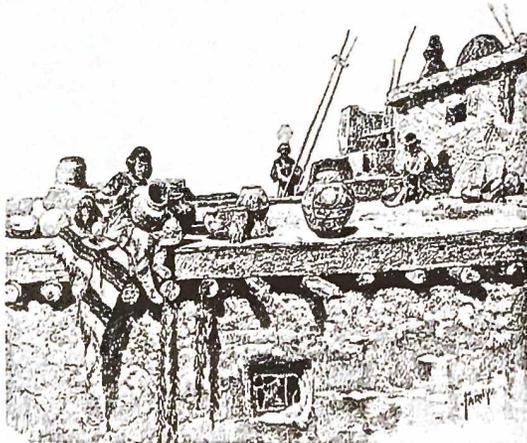
## The Birth of North American Archaeology

In 1856, the wise and sober Samuel Haven, Librarian of the American Antiquarian Society, published a remarkable essay, "Archaeology of the United States," in which he surveyed everything that was known about ancient North America, and the origins of the Native American (Meltzer, 2015; Sabloff and Willey, 1993). Haven set the tone for all future scholarly enquiry into the Native Americans. His conclusions were admirably cautious. "We desire to stop where evidence ceases," he stated at the outset. The Native Americans were of high antiquity, he believed. "All their characteristic affinities are found in the early conditions of Asiatic races."

Haven was right, but he had little evidence to rely upon. He lived at a time of intense curiosity about the American West, where government scientists and members of private expeditions, often surveyors, had come across abandoned pueblos and dry caves where surprisingly well-preserved artifacts were to be found. Serious research in these remote landscapes began with two remarkable pioneers, Smithsonian anthropologist Frank Cushing, and Adolph Bandelier, a Swiss-born mine engineer who became an anthropologist. Frank Cushing arrived at Zuni Pueblo in 1879, intending to stay for three weeks. He stayed for four and a half years, learning to speak the Zuni dialect fluently. Through what would now be called **participant observation**, he recorded an extraordinary wealth of information about Pueblo life (Figure 1.6). Cushing was not an archaeologist, but he made a rich collection of Zuni oral traditions about earlier times that helped him realize that the best way to study ancient times was by working back from the present into the past (Cushing, 1882–83). Adolph Bandelier arrived in the Southwest in 1880. He spent twelve years wandering from pueblo to pueblo on a mule, carrying all his worldly possessions in a saddle bag. At such pueblos as Pecos, in New Mexico, he recorded centuries of Southwestern history, oral traditions and local histories that reached back into the remote past. He also soon realized that the way to study early Pueblo history was to work back in time, "from the known to the unknown, step by step" (Bandelier, 1884).

To travel back from the known to the unknown required studying artifacts found in stratified layers in archaeological sites, probing below the most recent levels with their artifacts made by historic peoples, into much earlier layers with different pottery or stone tools. The first stratigraphic excavations in North America came in the Southwest in 1914. These used different styles of painted pottery to show that Southwestern cultures had changed through time. Thirteen years later, in 1927, the discovery of a stone **projectile point** alongside bones of extinct bison at **Folsom Plains**, New Mexico, showed that the North American past extended much further back than the commonly

1.6 Scene of Zuni life: decorating pottery. From Frank Cushing's *My Adventures in Zuni*. During this process, "no laughing, music, whistling, or other unnecessary noises were indulged in." The potters believed the sound would enter the clay and cause the vessel to shatter when fired.



assumed 4,000 years (for controversies, see Meltzer, 2015). Archaeology—digging for the past—was the only way to fill the long chronological gap between the pueblos and the Folsom hunters.

The pueblos of the Southwest were where tracking back from the present into the past truly began. There were several gifted excavators at work, but the best-known of them was the Harvard archaeologist Alfred Kidder, who excavated large ancient rubbish dumps at Pecos, New Mexico (Kidder and Schwartz, 2000) (see Box: Alfred Kidder and Pecos, New Mexico). He developed the first cultural sequence for the Southwest by following Bandelier's advice—work backward from what you know. This approach was termed the **Direct Historical Method** and is the basis of what became known as "culture history."

All of this depended on chronologies that were based partly on intelligent extrapolation from historical documents, and partly on guesswork, instinct, and an assumption that the first settlement of the Americas was relatively recent. The only accurate date for the more remote past came from tree-ring sequences extracted from wooden beams preserved in Southwestern pueblos. These dated sites up to about 2,000 years old. It was not until the 1950s that **radiocarbon dating** transformed North American archaeology. By then, the way we studied ancient North America had changed dramatically (for dating methods, see Box: How Old Is It?, p. 31).

## ALFRED KIDDER AND PECOS, NEW MEXICO

Alfred Kidder (1885–1963) was born in Marquette, Michigan, the son of a mining engineer (Givens, 1992). Admitted to Harvard University as a pre-medical student, he soon shifted his focus to anthropology. At the time, Harvard was the foremost center for anthropology in the country. In 1907, Kidder's Harvard mentors sent him on an archaeological survey in the **Four Corners** region of the Southwest. Kidder had never been west of Michigan. He immediately fell in love with the area and became fascinated with its archaeology (Figure 1.7). He graduated in 1908, visited Greece and Egypt with his family, then entered graduate school in 1909. Early on, he took a course in archaeological field methods from George Reisner, a well-known Egyptologist. Kidder visited Reisner's excavations in Egypt and the Sudan and learned his methods for



stratigraphic analysis and excavating large cemeteries, a major part of Sudanese archaeology.

Kidder's doctoral dissertation was a study of Southwestern pottery styles. He found the work nearly impossible, because excavators of the day ignored stratified layers. For his fieldwork in New Mexico's Pajarito Plateau, where modern-day Los Alamos lies, he used both ancient and modern pottery to develop a cultural sequence, publishing his findings in 1915. That same year, the Robert S. Peabody Foundation for Archaeology in Andover, Massachusetts, appointed Kidder director of a long-term excavation project at Pecos, New Mexico. Here, deep, undisturbed refuse heaps marked an abandoned pueblo. The Pecos research resumed after World War I, in 1920, and continued until 1929. Kidder was an enthusiastic and dynamic leader with a personality that attracted >>

1.7 Alfred Kidder at Pecos, New Mexico.

## How Do We Study Ancient North America?

Before World War II, the common estimate for the date of first settlement was 4,000 years ago. Today, we know that humans have hunted in North America for at least 14,000 years, perhaps somewhat longer—the controversy continues (see Chapter 2). The question of questions that confronted American archaeologists after the advent of radiocarbon dating was a simple one: how do we study 14,000 years of pre-Columbian history without the benefit of written records? The answer is, of course, with archaeology, but this answer needs considerable elaboration.

Archaeology is unique among academic disciplines, for it is the only way of studying how human societies developed and changed over immensely long periods. Archaeologists generally deal with millennia, and, in more recent times, in centuries. This means that archaeology is the primary means of writing the history of North America from first settlement up to the first fleeting contacts with outsiders, and then prolonged contact, the so-called *entrada*.

Until the 1960s archaeology was almost totally confined to studies of artifacts and changes in material culture over centuries and millennia. This was culture history, an approach that, at the time, was necessitated both by how little was known and by the rudimentary nature of chronological methods (see Box: Culture History, pp. 28–29). Since World War II, and especially since the radiocarbon revolution, archaeologists have relied heavily both on other scientific disciplines

young students. Many of them enjoyed distinguished careers elsewhere.

Like other Southwestern archaeologists, Kidder cleared pueblo rooms, but with a difference. He looked closely at changing pottery styles and asked what the changes meant. Kidder also carried out extensive excavations into the Pecos refuse heaps. But instead of digging in arbitrary levels, he took careful note of the features he encountered, such as heaps of discarded bones and broken utensils (Figure 1.8). His detailed pottery logs followed Reisner's practice of recording every find in three dimensions, so he could document even the smallest stratigraphic differences.

Within a few seasons Kidder had acquired a remarkable chronicle of changing Pecos pottery styles, marked especially by surface decoration, such as black painted designs. He had also

excavated hundreds of human burials. Harvard anthropologist E. A. Hooton, an authority on ancient human skeletons, visited the excavations, observing the bones and determining their sex and age. Valuable and unique information about both life expectancy and the effects of hard work on the human skeleton came

from this research. Hooton showed that most ancient Pecos people died in their twenties. After 1922, Kidder changed his strategy. He had acquired information about the architecture and expansion of the pueblo and excavated its earliest levels. Now he extended his research to surveys and excavations



1.8 The Pecos excavations at their height.

and on an ever-expanding war chest of highly technological methods that study everything from ancient diets to canoe building. Today's archaeology bears less and less resemblance to that of the early culture historians. Many culture historians were careful excavators, good observers of stratified occupation levels, and wizards at artifact classification, at placing stone tools, potsherds, and other finds in their correct relative order in time. They were mostly uninterested in today's central concerns, which are major themes of this book: how did people adapt to ever-changing, often challenging, environments over thousands of years? And what did these adaptations mean in terms of human behavior in the widest possible sense? Today we seek to explain the past as much as to describe it, using a tapestry of techniques and approaches to answer the largest and most difficult questions of the human past. Among these are: Why and how did humans settle in North America? Why did some ancient American societies develop much greater social complexity than others? How and why did agriculture replace hunting and gathering? What caused the emergence of powerful chiefdoms in the Midwest? We are still grappling with these fundamental issues.

### Historical Archaeology

Historians study documents of all kinds to study the historical past, everything from account books and census records to political archives and contemporary

at other sites, while analysing the great quantity of finds. His studies ranged much further than archaeology, delving into modern Pueblo Native American agriculture and even public health. The Pecos project was a remarkable example of team research at a time when most North American archaeology was very unsophisticated. Pecos foreshadowed the close-knit field projects of today's archaeology.

By 1927, Kidder had enough information to compile a detailed sequence of Pueblo and pre-Pueblo cultures in the Southwest. His long sequence began with **Basket Maker** cultures that were at least 2,000 years old. These people made no pottery and had no permanent homes. They were followed by pre-Pueblo and Pueblo cultures. At Pecos, Kidder found no fewer than six settlements stratified one above another. There was enough information for him to argue for eight major cultural stages, beginning with the Basket

Makers, dating to between 1500 BCE and 750 CE. Five Pueblo stages came after 750, ending in historic times, which began in 1600. The Pecos sequence showed that Southwestern people developed their cultures and institutions quite independently of other areas. Kidder's sequence for the Southwest has been the basis for all subsequent research (Kidder and Schwartz, 2000). There have, of course, been numerous modifications, but this is only to be expected.

The Pecos culture had one major disadvantage. There was no means of dating the sequence in calendar years. Fortunately, University of Arizona astronomer A. E. Douglass had developed tree-ring dating (**dendrochronology**), having been studying climatic change since 1901. In 1928 he was able to link his various tree-ring sequences from samples taken from pueblo beams and trees to historic times. Douglass's tree-ring chronologies date

the Basket Maker and Pueblo sequence at Pecos and elsewhere.

Alfred Kidder's methods of artifact analysis and excavation spread gradually across North America. All subsequent research in the Southwest, and much of the Americas, stems, ultimately, from the Pecos project. Thanks to Kidder's field training, his gifted students took the latest field methods with them when they worked elsewhere. He made accuracy, careful observation, and team research the basis of American archaeology. He subsequently worked on the ancient Maya. The 1920s through the early 1950s saw North American archaeologists focusing on sites, artifacts, and chronologies—what was called "culture history"; most speculation or theoretical discussion was considered not only unnecessary, but also intellectually unsound (see Box: Culture History, overleaf). Archaeology became basically a descriptive, historical methodology that paid lip service to anthropology.

## CULTURE HISTORY

Culture history is based on two fundamental principles that were enumerated in the early twentieth century (Lyman and Dunnell, 1997). The first is inductive research method, the development of generalizations about a research problem that are based on numerous specific observations. The second is what is called a "normative" view of culture. This is the notion that abstract rules govern what cultures consider to be normal behavior. The normative view is a descriptive approach to culture, which discusses it during one long period or throughout time. Archaeologists base all culture history on the assumption that surviving artifacts, such as potsherds, display stylistic and other changes that represent the changing norms of human behavior through time. Culture history resulted

from careful stratigraphic observation, meticulous artifact classifications and orderings, and accurate chronologies. The culture-historical approach produced a descriptive outline of ancient North America in time and space that took generations to assemble.

The time and space frameworks of culture history, Kidder's Direct Historical Method, were the only way to populate this chasm with ancient societies. Large-scale river basin and dam surveys between the 1930s and 1950s added great quantities of data for much of North America. From Kidder's work and that of others were born the research strategies for developing culture histories that were to be applied by dozens of North American archaeologists in coming years: preliminary site survey, selection of criteria for ranking these sites in chronological order, then comparative study of these criteria, followed by a

search for, and excavation of, stratified sites; finally, more survey and additional excavations to confirm the results and refine cultural and stratigraphic findings. Some of the greatest impetus came from excavations by W. D. Strong and Waldo Wedel before World War II. They started with a rich lode of historical information collected by anthropologists and amateur historians. They excavated historic Pawnee sites, then went on to dig settlements from the **contact period** and from remoter times. The excavations revealed dramatic cultural changes on the Plains: shifts from bison hunting on foot to horticulture in river valleys, then back to bison hunting again, this time on horseback. Strong's *Introduction to Nebraska Archaeology* (1935) became a model for such research in many areas of North America.

Artifact classification was fundamental to culture history.

As excavations in the Southwest introduced at least a degree of chronology into stratigraphic sequences, archaeologists were forced to refine their typologies to take account of change through time. Inevitably, since it was the most common artifact, the humble potsherd became the yardstick of classification, a kind of changing marker that was used to subdivide ancient times into ever more minute subdivisions. Before World War II, a group of Midwestern archaeologists developed the famous **Midwestern Taxonomic Method**, or McKern Classification. This dealt not with time and space, but with artifact classifications alone. Its architects assumed that formal similarities between artifact forms signified both shared cultural origins and shared cultural history. They proposed a taxonomic hierarchy that began with components, a unit of a culture complex

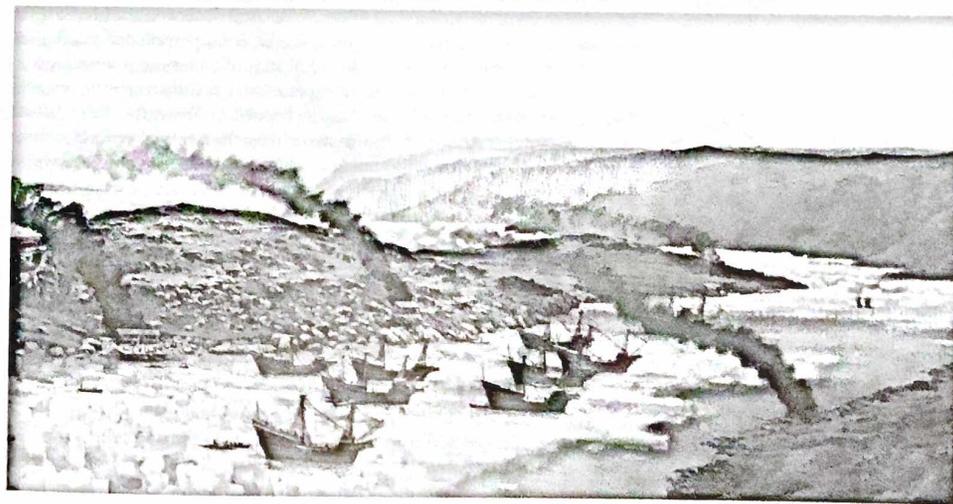
that could be a site, or a distinct layer in a site. Several components were then grouped into a focus, components that shared high frequencies of similar culture traits. Foci were classified into aspects, broader groupings where there were still many culture traits in common. The highest levels in the McKern Classification were the phase, the pattern, and the base, all of them founded on increasingly more generalized cultural traits (Willey and Phillips, 1958, offers an authoritative summary).

From these pioneer syntheses emerged the fundamental principles of culture history and nomenclature that are in use today, among them chronological schemes like the familiar Archaic-Woodland-Mississippian terminology of the **Eastern Woodlands** (Chapters 8, 11, and 12). Culture history and its analytical methods

are still important in North American archaeology. They have provided dozens of important cultural sequences, labeled with numerous local names for classificatory convenience. As we shall stress in later chapters, these subdivisions certainly do reflect change in artifacts; but to what extent they represent significant human behavior is a matter for discussion, and controversy. I have tended to downplay culture history in these pages except in the most general terms. For the purposes of this book, the tried and true methods of culture history are the essential framework for placing ancient American societies in their places in time and space, but today, new generations of researchers are deploying cutting-edge multidisciplinary approaches and more sophisticated theoretical models, giving us remarkably detailed insights into these same societies.

literature. The first written records of North America and its peoples, as well as of European voyages to the continent, start with the Norse in the tenth century CE, but are sporadic at best. More complete accounts begin with Columbus, Sebastian Cabot, and other well-known historical figures. Their journals, letters, and reports have been dissected in pitiless detail, as have the records of early colonies such as Plimoth Plantation (at Plymouth, New England) and Jamestown in Virginia. The available material proliferates rapidly during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.

Until relatively recently excavations on such historic sites as Colonial Williamsburg or Spanish missions were virtually non-existent. Today, historical archaeologists work alongside historians and add priceless dimensions to written accounts, especially about the lives of the humble and anonymous who labored in history's shadows (see Chapter 16). In recent years historical archaeology has made major contributions to the study of the diverse eighteenth-century population of Annapolis, Maryland, to our understanding of Spanish missions along what is called the Southern Borderlands, and into the daily lives of slaves, fisher folk, and urban workers in places as varied as a whaling settlement in Labrador, Newfoundland (Figure 1.9), and nineteenth-century Chinese villages in San Francisco Bay. As the late archaeologist James Deetz reminds us (1996), much of the importance of archaeology is in "small things forgotten," such things as clay pipes, coins, and fragments of eighteenth-century china and glass. Unfortunately, except for the Norse, historical records in North America extend back only about five centuries.



1.9 Artist's impression of Basque whale processing at Red Bay, Newfoundland.

### Oral Histories and Ethnohistory

As we have already mentioned, knowledge in non-literate societies passes from generation to generation by word of mouth. Oral traditions contain much information of great value, especially about spiritual beliefs and rituals, which are treasured by their caretakers. To those who hear them, they are publicly sanctioned performed history, subject to the critical evaluation of an audience who may have heard the same stories before. Oral histories are usually a rich mixture of mythic figures and events, of moral values, and of actual historical events and people (Whiteley, 2002). Until written down, they are learned by mnemonics and constant recitation. Inevitably they vary from one reciter to the next, and change in their details from one generation to the next, even if the main outline of the story remains intact. This means that they suffer from serious limitations when weighed against data from written records or archaeological research, which largely because they lack the precise chronologies that define past events. Nor do we know how much such histories have been influenced by Western literature, especially by such legends as Noah's flood in the Old Testament.

Ethnohistory encompasses the study of oral traditions and is a major source of information about Native American culture and history. It combines ethnographic and historical data as well as archaeology, and has been of much significance in Native American land-claim cases. This is an all-inclusive form of history that combines the memories and voices of living and ancient people as it culturally constructs their pasts. Ethnohistorical research throws important light on the last few centuries of Native American history and provides critical insights into older societies in such areas as the Southwest and Southeast.

### Multidisciplinary Archaeology

The archaeology of pre-Columbian times is concerned, above all, with changing long- and short-term human behavior in the face of environmental and other changes in the natural world. Classic definitions of archaeology describe it as the study of all aspects of past human experience primarily using the material (physical) remains of this behavior. Passing beyond dreary textbook definitions, what archaeologists strive to do is to move on from the material and look at both external influences on changing human societies and at the intangible elements—beliefs and other perishable aspects of human culture. Such research casts a broad net, which trawls the work of scientists in dozens of academic disciplines, from biology and climatology to forensic science and zoology. Our narratives and explanations come from jigsaw puzzles of conspicuous and inconspicuous clues, some of them seemingly trivial, such as subtle changes in plant collecting in the Great Basin, or new colors used for rock paintings. Herein lies the great fascination of archaeology as a way of decoding the past—on the one hand extreme specialization, on the other the need to create narratives surrounding major themes of 14,000 years of the human past.

Today's multidisciplinary archaeology relies heavily not only on its traditional ally, anthropology, but also on environmental science and paleoclimatology to document climatic and landscape changes, on biology and biological anthropology for new generations of studies that involve ancient and modern DNA to study the first Americans, and bone isotope chemistry that allows you to identify changing dietary preferences and, using teeth, even individual life histories. Long gone

are the days of solitary excavators, when it sufficed to classify artifacts and place them in order through time. Today's archaeology is carefully orchestrated teamwork, both history and social science, both social science and natural science—a true study of ancient humanity. As such, it has become a highly effective tool for writing the history in these pages.

*Ancient North America* is a story of 14,000 years of a continent's human history. For obvious reasons, there are times when we go off on a methodological tangent in a strategically placed box to explain a key method, such as radiocarbon dating,

### HOW OLD IS IT?

Fourteen thousand years is a long time. Fortunately, however, we now have well-established dating methods that allow us to develop reasonably accurate chronologies for North America's past. More lengthy descriptions will be found in any introduction archaeology textbook.

A brief description of the major methods follows:

#### Objects of Known Age

(1000 CE to the present day)

These provide a means of dating sites that coincide with, or are later than, European contact, even sporadic visits, for example those of the Norse in the Canadian Arctic (Chapter 14). Artifacts including imported china and glass, dated European coins, and other finds help in dating individual structures at such sites as Colonial Williamsburg

and Jamestown. Imported glass beads and other objects traded with Native American groups are also of use, if it is possible to date them accurately.

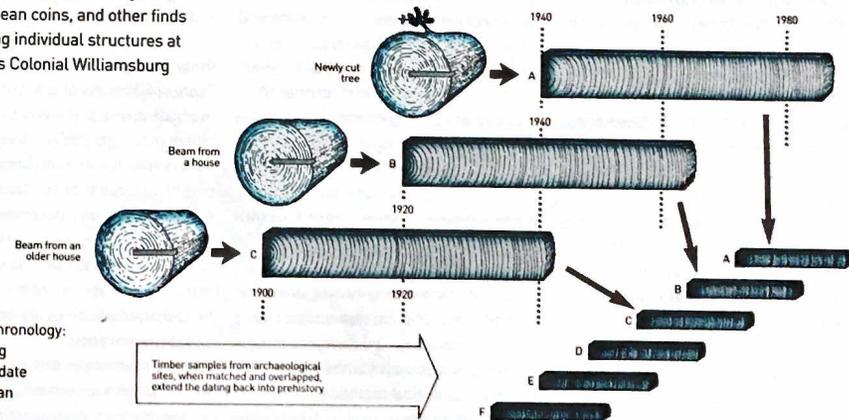
#### Dendrochronology (Tree-Ring Dating)

(in North America mainly used c. 1 CE to the present day; also has other applications back to at least 12,500 years ago)

The astronomer A. W. Douglass first investigated tree-rings as a way of studying climate change and sunspots. His chronologies, originally based on living trees, extended to pueblo door and roof beams once he had developed a core borer that took samples without

damaging them. In 1928 a tree-ring sequence from a structure at Show Low, Arizona, enabled him to link prehistoric sequences from the pueblos with those from living trees. His composite sequence far back into the past provided accurate dates for pueblos of all kinds, notably Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon, dating to the late first millennium CE (Figure 1.10).

Today there are so many tree-ring sequences from the Southwest that we can trace seasonal rainfall changes across the region, as well as decipher the complex building histories of major pueblos with great accuracy. Dendrochronology provides accurate



1.10 Dendrochronology: using tree-ring sequences to date North American archaeology.

or a specific artifact or fishing method. In the final analysis, we are concerned here with what happened, when, and why, with achieving a closer understanding of ancient North American societies. Multidisciplinary archaeology is our major tool for doing so (see Box: How Old Is It?).

### Thinking about the Past

How has archaeologists' thinking about the North American past changed since the watershed moment of the radiocarbon revolution? Modern archaeological

dates that can be used to calibrate radiocarbon ages obtained from C14 samples. In Europe and elsewhere tree-ring curves, mainly from oak trees, extend back as far as 8000 BCE.

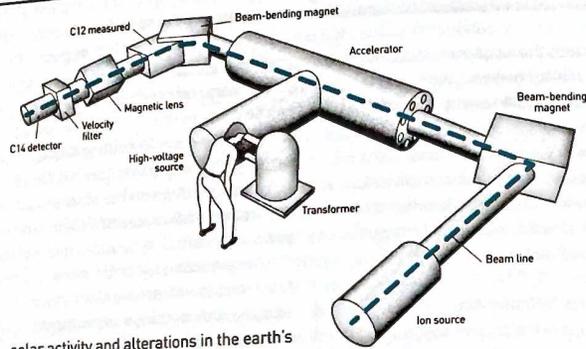
#### Radiocarbon Dating

[150 CE and later to c. 40,000 years ago] Radiocarbon (C14) dating, developed by chemist Willard Libby in the late 1940s, has become the primary dating method for pre-Columbian North American societies. Radiocarbon (known as carbon 14) is constantly being created in the atmosphere by the interaction of cosmic rays with atmospheric nitrogen. The radioactive part of carbon becomes a portion of the air absorbed and stored by plants. Animals then acquire the radioactive carbon by eating the vegetation. When an animal or plant dies, it stops exchanging carbon with the environment. From that moment on, the carbon content decreases as it undergoes radioactive decay. Measuring the amount of carbon in a dead plant, wood fragment, or bone provides a way of calculating its age. Half of the carbon in any sample will decay after about 5,730 years (the half-life). The outer limits of the dating method are around 40,000 years, when the amount of carbon is too small to measure.

A difficulty with this method is establishing the changes in concentrations of radiocarbon in the atmosphere caused by fluctuations in

solar activity and alterations in the earth's magnetic field. The solution has been to compare radiocarbon dates with those in accurate calendar years from tree-rings. The latter provide firm dates in the Southwest and elsewhere going back at least 12,500 years. (Even earlier dates are calibrated with growth rings from tropical coral. Some of the differences between C14 and tree-ring dates were as large as 2,000 years. In recent years, the use of **accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS)** has allowed the dating of individual C14 atoms directly, enabling researchers to date items as small as individual seeds—invaluable when studying early agriculture, for example (Figure 1.11). Sophisticated statistical analyses of groups of samples are now beginning to provide highly detailed chronologies for multi-layer sites.

Radiocarbon dating is the major chronological method used in North America.



**1.11** Accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS) radiocarbon dating. Ionized carbon atoms from the sample are pulled in beam form into the accelerator, non-C14 particles are filtered out, then the beam is focused as it reaches a sensitive detector that counts the remaining ions.

#### Other Dating Methods

There are a variety of other dating methods in use, some experimental, others more established. They are mostly used on much earlier archaeological sites than those in North America. Among them is thermoluminescence (TL) dating, which measures the amount of radiation from radioactive elements in the environment, stored in humanly heated objects such as clay vessels. TL dating has not acquired the accuracy of C14 methods, and is still experimental, which means it is currently little used.

theory was effectively born during the 1960s, with serious attempts to assemble a body of theory for archaeology as distinctive as that for physics and other established sciences (Trigger, 2006).

#### Julian Steward and Cultural Ecology

Today's archaeology began with deliberate moves away from culture history. The anthropologist Julian Steward (1902–1972) worked among small bands of Shoshone in the west's Great Basin. He developed an approach he called **cultural ecology**, the study of the whole picture of the ways in which human populations adapt to, and transform, their environments. His focus was not on what happened, but why change occurred. Cultural ecology is a fundamental part of today's archaeology. The Shoshone were constantly on the move, questing for food and water in some of the driest landscapes in North America (Chapter 6). While studying their distribution and the annual ranges of Shoshone hunter-gatherers, Steward (1955) realized that changes in human cultures went hand-in-hand with shifting environmental conditions.

#### Lewis Binford and Processual Archaeology

As new generations of scholars started examining the delicate and ever-changing relationships between human societies and their natural environments, they cast

### LEWIS BINFORD'S PROCESSUAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Lewis Binford (1931–2011) was one of the most influential archaeologists of the late twentieth century. Whether you agreed with him or not, his ideas and approach to archaeology, known collectively as “processual archaeology,” will endure for generations. Aggressive, charismatic, and opinionated, Binford attracted sometimes fanatical disciples, largely because he upset the conservative, well-established world of culture history. Originally intending to become a biologist, he became interested in anthropology and archaeology while in the military. Binford earned a Ph.D. in anthropology at the University of Michigan, when he became dissatisfied with “people in white coats counting potsherds” and came under the influence of a prominent cultural anthropologist,

Leslie White, who taught him about cultural systems. While at the University of Chicago, he wrote his first landmark paper, “Archaeology as Anthropology” (1962), arguing passionately for an archaeology that sought explanations for cultural change. His ideas attracted a group of researchers who were founders of processual archaeology. Binford's critics spoke contemptuously of a “new archaeology.”

Binford then published a series of papers in which he argued for more rigorous scientific testing, for the development of independent methods for testing propositions about the past. He called for the use of formal research designs, for scientific approaches that provided interaction between old data, new ideas, and fresh data that would enable archaeologists to pose research hypotheses. Working hypotheses were nothing new in archaeology, but Binford's approach was different because he advocated that these hypotheses be

tested explicitly against archaeological data collected in the field, and against other hypotheses that had been rejected. Once a hypothesis was tested against raw data, it could join the body of reliable knowledge upon which further, more precise, hypotheses could be erected.

Binford and his many disciples also challenged the assumption that because the archaeological record is incomplete, reliable interpretation of the non-material and perishable components of ancient society and culture is impossible. Their argument was that all artifacts found in an archaeological culture occur in meaningful patterns that are systematically related to the economies, kinship systems, and other contexts within which they were used. Artifacts are far more than material items. Rather, they reflect many of the often-intangible variables that went into determining the actual form of the objects preserved.

Lewis Binford was among those who raised a fundamental question: ➤➤



1.12 Lewis Binford.

around for theoretical models, borrowing models from biologists, ecologists, even sociologists. The impact of philosophers of science, among them Thomas Kuhn and Carl Hempel, and of general systems theory began to be felt in archaeology during the 1960s. Systems theory was particularly attractive as a conceptual model, for it allowed an archaeologist to think of human cultures as complicated systems of interacting elements, such as technology and social organization, which systems interacted in turn with the ecological systems of which they were a part. Lewis Binford (1931–2011) was among the most influential of these scholars, who argued for a new approach that became known as **processual archaeology** (Figure 1.12). He also stressed the importance of ethnographic analogy and studying living hunter-gatherer societies—the dynamic present as opposed to the static past (see Box: Lewis Binford's Processual Archaeology). Analogy is based, ultimately, on the Direct Historical Method, the notion of working back from the present into the remote past (Chapman and Wylie, 2016). Direct historical analogies are highly effective with historic sites, such as, for example, the Colonial village at Martin's Hundred, Virginia, where textual sources provided valuable analogies about house ownership and other details of the archaeological record (Chapter 15). Such analogies lose much of their effectiveness as one moves further back in time.

The debates over processual archaeology raged fast and furious in the 1960s and 1970s. Some scholars argued that archaeology was a science, whose objective

that of the relationship between the static (long dead) archaeological record of the past, and the dynamic human behavior of the (living) present. How, he and others asked, could we study the archaeological record, when we have only material evidence to work with—artifacts and food remains changed by centuries, even millennia, underground? Clearly, historic and living societies were an important source of interpretative information. Between the 1960s and 1980s, ethnographic analogy and ethnoarchaeology, the study of living peoples, came to center stage.

Ethnoarchaeology, sometimes called “living archaeology,” is the study of contemporary societies to aid in the understanding and interpretation of the archaeological record. In a way, it is a logical extension of the Direct Historical Method in that it uses the present to throw light on the past. By living in, say, an Eskimo hunting camp and observing the activities of



its occupants, the archaeologist hopes to record archaeologically observable patterns, knowing what activities brought them into existence. Lewis Binford lived among the Nunamiut people of Alaska,

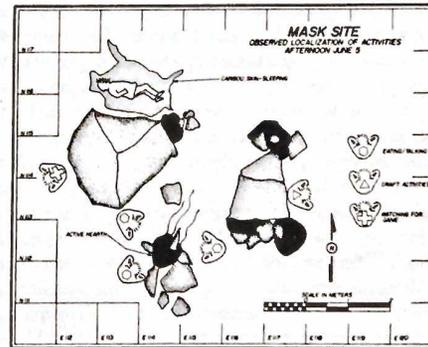
hunters who gain over 80 percent of their subsistence from caribou hunting (Figure 1.13). He wanted to find out as much as he could about “all aspects of the procurement, processing, and

was to study basic laws of human behavior. Other archaeologists viewed archaeology as examining the activities of past human beings, as a discipline that was less a science than a historical discipline with its own limitations, resources, and explanatory methods (Flannery, 1973). Everyone agreed, however, that mathematical models, statistical approaches, and rigorous scientific methods would become ever more important. Processual archaeology, with its strongly materialist and ecological approach, has become a mainstream framework for much North American archaeology.

### Post-Processual Archaeology

Processual archaeology emphasized scientific methods and the study of the processes of ancient culture change. Much research focused on ecological relationships, human lifeways, and technological developments. Inevitably, there was a healthy reaction against this materialist approach, which seemed to dehumanize the past in its quest to understand change. Many processual archaeologists dismissed religion, ideology, and the individual as marginal to the central enterprise of studying subsistence and settlement. But, from the late 1970s to today, more researchers have thought about the entire spectrum of human behavior—the development and expression of human consciousness, religion and belief, symbolism and iconography. These researches constitute

**1.13** Nunamiut ethnoarchaeology. *Left:* A caribou-skin bed where a man slept while his hunting partner watched the game. *Right:* Binford's drawing of various Nunamiut activities observed by him at the Mask site, Anaktuvuk Pass, on a spring afternoon. His researches acquired a large quantity of empirical data that assists in the interpretation of archaeological sites.



consumption strategies of the Nunamiut Eskimo and relate these behaviors directly to their faunal consequences” (Binford, 2012). Binford chose to concentrate on animal bones rather than artifacts, because, although the bones were not humanly manufactured, their use patterns were the result of cultural activity.

Thanks to studies of actual Nunamiut hunting, of their intimate knowledge of caribou anatomy, and of existing and “archaeological” camps and caches, Binford assembled a mass of empirical data about human exploitation of animals that was applicable not only to the Nunamiut and other caribou hunters, but also to the interpretation

of archaeological sites elsewhere. He showed how local cultural adaptations could be, how the Nunamiut depended on interacting topographic, climatic, logistical, and other realities. He showed how changes in stone-tool frequencies or pottery forms may reflect no significant change in adaptation at all. It is impossible to tell without understanding the strategies behind the local adaptation through time. And such understandings can be obtained only from sites where food remains and other such data are available.

Lewis Binford's legacy lies in the areas of archaeological theory and ethnoarchaeology. His advocacy for processual archaeology will endure for generations (Binford, 2002).

what is often loosely called **post-processual archaeology**, a reaction to processualism (Hodder, 1999, 2012). Post-processualists argued that we can no longer interpret the past purely in terms of ecological, technological, and other material considerations. Culture is interactive, created by people as actors, who create, manipulate, and remake the world they live in. We are doing this ourselves in the rapidly changing industrial societies of today, where ethnic identity, gender roles, and social inequality are constant issues in daily life. Surely the same behavior marked the diverse societies of the past and played a major role in the creation of ancient North American society.

### Current Theoretical Directions

Today we grapple with a fundamental problem: how can one study the development of human consciousness, religious beliefs, and the entire spectrum of intangible human behavior—what has been called “the archaeology of mind”? The archaeology of mind includes all those aspects of human culture that are the product of the ancient mind: cosmology, religion, ideology, iconography, and all forms of human intellectual and symbolic behavior. Studying the ancient intangible will never be an easy undertaking; it requires large data sets, multidisciplinary research, excellent preservation, and sophisticated theoretical models. The current theoretical directions have been emerging for the past twenty years. They include the gendering of the past (Nelson and Alberti, 2006). Gender research is now highly analytical and part of many theoretical approaches. The archaeology of individuals has also moved to center stage, sometimes denoted by a popular buzzword, “agency.” Discussions of agency have revolved around such topics as elite-controlled ideologies and symbolism in the rise of Mississippian chiefdoms (Pauketat, 2004) (Chapter 12), and leadership at Chaco Canyon (Kantner, 2004) (Chapter 10). There is now much more concern with issues of diversity, ethnicity, and cultural identity, all of which have important theoretical implications far beyond North America (Nicholas, 2011).

There is no single theoretical approach to North American archaeology, nor should there be. Some level of theoretical disagreement and debate is essential to dynamic, ongoing research, and issues such as gender and agency cut across all manner of theoretical perspectives. More and more archaeologists accept that there are many ways of approaching the past, and are engaging in dialogue about it. We are in an era when a diversity of theoretical approaches forms the context of ongoing research which is far more sophisticated than ever before.

### Archaeology and Stakeholders

All societies have an interest in the past. It is always around them, haunting, mystifying, tantalizing, sometimes offering potential lessons for the present and future. The past is important because social life unfolds through time, embedded within a framework of cultural expectations and values. In the high Arctic, Inuit preserve their traditional attitudes, skills, and coping mechanisms in some of the harshest environments on earth. They do this by incorporating the lessons of the past into the present. In many societies the ancestors are the guardians of the land, which symbolizes present, past, and future. Westerners have an intense scientific interest in the past, born partly of curiosity, but also out of a need for historical identity. There are many reasons to attempt to preserve

an accurate record of the past, and no one, least of all an archaeologist, should assume that he or she is uniquely privileged in being interested in the remains of that past. All of us, whether descendants of colonists, homeowners, Native Americans, or simply tourists, are stakeholders in North America's past. Mediating between the often widely differing perspectives of stakeholders can be a complex, emotion-filled process, but it is of fundamental importance.

We have no monopoly on history. Native American views of archaeology cover the whole spectrum, from violent revulsion to profound interest in the objectives and findings of the science (Watkins, 2001, 2003). Many Native Americans resent the cavalier attitudes of previous excavators and regard “scientific” accounts of ancient North America (such as that in this book) as irrelevant to their culture and to their lives. They believe their view of the world, based as it is in cyclical time and on a close relationship between the living and spiritual worlds, offers them an adequate explanation of human existence. They also point out that many archaeologists have chosen to ignore oral traditions, a major source of Native American history and legend. Many Native Americans have a deep suspicion of archaeologists. They resent being treated like scientific specimens, and, one must admit, they have a point. At the same time, they are deeply concerned at the invasion of sacred sites by New Agers and other folk on bizarre spiritual quests. In rare instances, Native American spiritual leaders are contacting archaeologists whom they trust to assist in the recording of such sites before they are destroyed or dispersed.

All too often, the archaeologist and the local community have different interests in the past. To the archaeologist, the past is scientific data to be studied with all the rigor of modern science. To local people, the past is often highly personalized and the property of the ancestors. Both interpretations are valid alternative versions of history that deserve respect and understanding, for they play a vital role in the creation and reaffirmation of cultural identity. And they raise a fundamental question, which lies behind many Native American objections to archaeological research: do archaeologists, usually outsiders, have anything to offer to a cultural group which already has a valid version of its history? Why should they be permitted to dig up the burials of ancestors or other settlements and sacred places under the guise of studying what is, to the people, a known history? It is a question that archaeologists have barely begun to address. Alternative, and often compelling, accounts of ancient times exist, which play an important role in helping minority groups and others to maintain their traditional heritage.

For generations, many Native American communities have been incensed by the excavation of ancient burials and the desecration of sacred places by archaeologists with scant concern for Native American culture. They pushed for laws forbidding grave excavation and stipulating the reburial or repatriation of excavated skeletons. The result was the **Native American Grave Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA)** (Chari and Lavallee, 2013). Under this act, all federal agencies and museums receiving federal funds are required to inventory their holdings of Native American human remains and associated grave goods, and all “objects of cultural patrimony.” The inventory process will attempt to establish the cultural affiliations of their holdings, and, in the case of skeletons, direct lineal connections with living Native American groups.

If such relationships are established, then the organization is required to notify the relevant Native American organization and offer them the opportunity to repatriate the material. A second requirement protects all Native American graves and other cultural objects found within archaeological sites on federal and tribal land. The act also requires consultation with Native American authorities over the disposal and treatment of any finds, whether made during scientific investigations or by accident.

NAGPRA is having a profound effect on North American archaeology. The Native American Rights Fund estimates there may be as many as 600,000 Native American human skeletons in private and public collections. Archaeologists and anthropologists worry that much of their scientific database for studying such topics as ancient diseases and diet will be lost with systematic reburial of ancient populations. They argue that reburial would deprive future generations of vital scientific information. Others, including many archaeologists, believe that reburial and repatriation are ethical issues and should outweigh any scientific gain. While there are points to be made on both sides, Native Americans feel strongly about repatriation for many reasons, not least because they wish to preserve traditions and values as a way of addressing current social ills. Many of the issues concern basic questions about the morality of archaeological research. Certainly in future no archaeologist in North America will be able to excavate a site or a historic burial on federal or state land without close consultation with Native Americans, and without working with them in ways that archaeologists had not imagined until recently. While such consultation may prevent some research and some excavations, there is no question that anything but good will come of a close working relationship between Native Americans and those who excavate their sites.

The sometimes-angry polarization of archaeologists and Native Americans is slowly giving way to a new era in which both groups cooperate, albeit sometimes cautiously (Watkins, 2003). But once trust is built, the results can be rewarding. The Hopi, Navajo, and Zuni Nations of the Southwest have their own **Cultural Resource Management** programs, and other groups are following suit (Gregory and Wilcox, 2007). The future of North American archaeology lies in collaborative research in which Native Americans play a leading role.

This book tells a story teased from thousands of minute clues, many of them exotic and obscure, but it is a vital history of anonymous people going about their daily lives—negotiating, communicating, avoiding, loving and hating, growing up, getting married, having children, and dying. It is a chronicle of adaptation and opportunism, of emerging diversity, and, above all, of societies where ties of kin were all-important, and where close links with the supernatural world were at the core of human existence. Archaeology, which studies the material remains of the past, can reconstruct but a shadow of what happened. As archaeological methods improve and multidisciplinary research accelerates, however, the shadows gradually emerge into full sunlight and we discern more and more as we gaze into what has been called the “mirror of the intangible.” All of this history began with a few small hunter-gatherer bands who crossed from Siberia into Alaska. Their story unfolds in Chapter 2.

## SUMMARY

- Speculations about the first Americans began in the sixteenth century and culminated in the so-called Myth of the Moundbuilders in the nineteenth century.
- Professional research began with Adolph Bandelier and Frank Cushing in the Southwest during the 1880s, and leapt forward with Cyrus Thomas's Moundbuilder project in the 1890s.
- Alfred Kidder worked at Pecos, New Mexico, immediately after World War I. He developed the first cultural sequence for the Southwest and pioneered the Direct Historical Method, the basis of what became culture history.
- The 1920s to the 1950s saw a focus on artifacts and chronologies, which culminated in the development of radiocarbon dating in the 1950s. This produced the first secure chronologies for ancient North America.
- Today's North American archaeology is a multidisciplinary approach to the past that combines anthropology, history, and other disciplines with basic archaeological research.
- Since the 1950s, North American archaeology has developed theoretical sophistication, with such approaches as cultural ecology, processual archaeology and post-processual archaeology. Today's archaeological theory is very diverse in its approaches.
- There are many stakeholders in the North American past, of whom archaeologists are one. The future of North American archaeology depends on collaborative research with many of these stakeholders, especially Native Americans.