FROM THE DIRECTOR

WHAT’S IN A NAME?

ERIC BLINMAN, Ph.D.
OAS DIRECTOR

Although we use them constantly and usually unconsciously, names are rarely neutral. Names carry information that is substantive, historical, and even prejudicial. But that also means the conscious consideration of naming can be a “teaching moment” about the complexities of history and culture.

Much of OAS education outreach engages members of my generation (60+). We grew up and were educated with the term “Anasazi” applied to the ancestors of Puebloan peoples of the northern Southwest. When American settlers first became aware of Four Corners archaeology, the new immigrants were struck by the contrast between the ancient dwellings and the homes of the indigenous people of the region (Navajo and Ute). When Euroamericans asked the Natives what people were associated with the sites, the Navajo responded with “Anasazi,” their term that carried the gloss of “ancient ones” with overtones of foreigners and malevolence (sometimes translated as “enemy ancestors”). The term Anasazi stuck, and it became the name of record in museum displays and textbooks.

As a Euroamerican academic discipline within anthropology, the maturation of archaeology as “culturally sensitive” has been slow. Generations of Mesa Verde visitors associated “Anasazi” with titillating

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SEARCHING FOR SHERDS

AT PUEBLO COLORADO

The early October hike in the vicinity of Pueblo Colorado had to be delayed a day due to rain and mud. Unlike the broad expanses of most of the Galisteo Basin, this area was almost cozy, with the feel of a neighborhood. Dean Wilson provided expert commentary on the pottery, with dates as early as the early twelfth century (a surprise) and cultural connections in all directions. Photos by Frank Chambers.
Evening Class Planned at OAS

Intro to SW Ethnology and Archaeology – Eric Blinman

Last Spring, FOA sponsored an eight session evening class on Southwestern Archaeology and Ethnology taught by Eric Blinman (OAS director). It was the second edition of the course, and we have been encouraged to make the course a regular offering. We will be offering this class over eight consecutive Wednesday evenings starting Jan. 8, 2020 (through Feb. 26, 2020). The class will meet at CNMA, and feedback suggested that we start at 6:15 p.m., to take a little pressure off of participants who work. Participants can bring snacks or even dinner into the classroom. The classes are designed to last an hour, but with discussion and questions most classes will last until 7:30 p.m.

The format will consist of PowerPoint lecture presentations, and the contents of the PowerPoints will be distributed as PDFs a few days after each class. Although treatments of early prehistory will be at a continent-wide scale, as we approach the past 2,000 years we will focus in on the northern Southwest, with only passing coverage of Mogollon, Mimbres, and Hohokam.

The class will begin with principles of human ecology and the environment that are common to all peoples. This will include a background on archaeological method and theory (the limitations of how we know what we think we know). We will then cover modern Native American languages and cultures of the Southwest, emphasizing the broad similarities and differences that define the end points of our archaeological histories.

Once that foundation is behind us, classes will launch into the deep human histories of the Americas, focusing on the peopling of the New World, late glacial environments and peoples, and then the adaptation to the changing environment of the western United States. The bulk of the class sessions will cover the last 3,000 or so years (the agricultural period) when we begin to see the modern lifeways and peoples of the Southwest take shape. We will end the class with the first century of the Euroamerican colonial entraña, bringing us to the threshold of today’s multicultural diversity.

There will not be required readings for this course, per se, nor required tests or papers. There’s no necessary textbook that covers the subject the way it will be presented in class, although Linda Cordell and Maxine McBrinn’s Archaeology of the Southwest, 3rd Edition, and John Kanter’s Ancient Puebloan Southwest are solid resources for a class like this (Maxine is an OAS Research Associate and is currently revising her textbook, and John was second in command at SAR for a time). Blinman will provide recommended readings along the way, if people would like to delve deeper into various topics. There are currently no commitments from other archaeologists as guest discussants, but that’s always a possibility.

Class Details

The class will be offered over eight consecutive Wednesday evenings starting Jan. 8, 2020. Cost for the eight sessions will be $125 per person (no refunds for missed classes). Enrollment will be limited to 20 people. To register, call the FOA hotline, (505) 982-7799, ext. 6, starting at 7 a.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2019.

Director

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displays of mummies and skeletons, and the history of ancient Puebloan peoples was disconnected from descendant communities by equating migration with “mystery.” This has changed (slowly and haltingly) over the past two generations with increasing assertions of identity by descendant communities and by the recognition that archaeology needs to take sovereignty and social justice issues more seriously.

As a result, but with one quite prominent exception, descendant Pueblo communities have successfully lobbied for the abandonment of “Anasazi” as a name for past Puebloan peoples.

Since the complexities of at least four distinct Puebloan culture histories had been obscured within the singular term “Anasazi,” it hasn’t really been appropriate to simply substitute a single label from any of the Hopi, Zuni, Keresan, or Tanoan language families. The compromise (for now) has been to substitute “Ancestral Puebloan,” in most interpretive contexts, but even that isn’t a clean solution. Archaeologists still refer to Mimbres and Mogollon as distinct past cultural groups, but aren’t these two groups also ancestral to contemporary Puebloan peoples?

Exceptions to the abandonment of the term “Anasazi” can be a surprise when we encounter them in modern archaeological literature. The persistent use comes out of the complex cultural and territorial sovereignty of modern Southwestern peoples. Archaeologists reporting work done under the auspices of the Navajo Nation are encouraged if not required to continue to use “Anasazi” in published works derived from Navajo Nation projects. From the Navajo perspective, “Ancestral Puebloan” disenfranchises clans that have legitimate descent claims and it ignores Navajo oral traditions that seamlessly incorporate Anasazi sites into the fabric and rhythm of Navajo history.

One of the joys of being an archaeologist at OAS is that we have the luxury of working regularly with descendant communities. If that means we can occasionally find ourselves in uncomfortable situations, we simply have to embrace the complexity.
Office of Archaeological Studies

The Office of Archaeological Studies (OAS) was the first museum program of its kind in the nation. The OAS staff conducts international field and laboratory research, offers educational opportunities for school groups and civic organizations, and works to preserve, protect, and interpret prehistoric and historic sites throughout New Mexico.

Friends of Archaeology

The Friends of Archaeology is an interest group within the Museum of New Mexico Foundation that supports the OAS. To join the FOA, you need only become a member of the Museum of New Mexico Foundation and sign up. Visit www.nmarchaeology.org for information. We’re also on Facebook: just search for “@FriendsofArchaeology.”

Mission Statement

The mission of FOA is to support the OAS in the achievement of its archaeological services mandate from the State of New Mexico through participation in and funding of research and education projects.

Friends of Archaeology Board

Chair: Ann Noble
Treasurer: Linda Mowbray
Board Members: Charmay Allred Joyce Blalock Jerry Cooke Pamela K. Misener Kathleen Murphy Jerry Sabloff Richard Schmeal Sherill Spaar David Young Eric Blinman (OAS Director) Jennifer Kilbourn (FOA Coordinator)

On Site at the Palace

OAS archaeologists were on site this summer at the Palace of the Governors in downtown Santa Fe. Archaeologists excavated prior to the installation of a new fire suppression system and new heating and air conditioning equipment at the National Historic Landmark.

Photos by Scott Jaquith
Bag Lunch Talks

Talks are held in the OAS Conference Room at the Center for New Mexico Archaeology. Talks are informal (and you can bring your bag lunch). Usually, seating is adequate, but we have had 80-plus people show up for a talk in a room that can only hold 35. Seating is available on a first-come-first-served basis. All talks begin at noon, unless otherwise noted.

Pots, People, and Archaeology: Challenges of Using Ceramic Data for Culture History Studies
Tuesday, December 10, 2019
by Eric Blinman, OAS Director

Pottery has been a mainstay of Southwestern archaeology. Calibrated by tree-ring dates, temporal change in pottery is the most widely used dating tool, geographic occurrences have supported inferences of exchange and interaction, and ethnic differences and migrations have been argued from stylistic and technological similarity and difference. Principles of ceramic ecology underlie this potential, but imperfect appreciation of pottery as a system has led to some missteps in large scale interpretation.

Learning from Mistakes: Transforming a Family’s Sixth Century Catastrophe into a Modern Day Teaching Moment
Tuesday, January 14, 2020
by Mollie Toll and Pam McBride

Archaeology’s pursuit of collecting and organizing evidence of human adaptation is an ideal vehicle for national and state Social Studies, ELA, and Science standards that focus on observation and inference. But not all sites are equally suited to generate curiosity and argumentation. In the 6th century AD, a family’s home south of Quemado, New Mexico, was consumed by fire, preserving much of the moment as a carbonized snapshot of daily life. Detail, context, and an engaging human story are essential components, and OAS Outreach staff have memorialized the moment for schools across the state.

OAS staff members are encouraged to reprise professional talks at our bag lunch events. We also encourage visiting scholars to update us on their research. Please visit www.nmarchaeology.org to catch any additional spur-of-the-moment talks.

In Remembrance, Loren Jacobson

Loren Jacobson was the husband of Linda Goodman, long time and now retired ethnohistorian for OAS. Loren was a brilliant material scientist who had a long career of scientific public service for the U.S. Airforce and the Livermore and Los Alamos National Laboratories. He was a metallurgist, and in addition to practical and theoretical research, he contributed to the development of safe handling procedures for hazardous materials (even advising OAS about how we should deal with some of our own potentially dangerous materials). In addition to his scientific competence and his incredibly supportive relationship with Linda, he was a role model in two other ways. First was through the joy he expressed in his support for, and participation in, local and regional art communities. Loren’s rich baritone voice contributed to Santa Fe Pro Coro; Santa Fe Symphony Chorus; Sangre de Cristo Chorale; Coro de Camara, Los Alamos; Los Alamos Choral Society; and the Santa Fe Desert Chorale. Second was his commitment to teaching. Following his retirement from LANL, and at considerable personal sacrifice as his health and mobility declined, Loren taught classes in physics, engineering, and metallurgy at New Mexico Tech in Socorro. Committed to passing on his professional knowledge to the next generation of scientists, he served as professor and mentor to dozens of students and researchers. We extend our condolences to Linda, and our respect for Loren’s legacy in all his endeavors.

Find FOA on Facebook

Friends of Archaeology is now on Facebook. Our page features photos and information on present and past events, demonstrations, and workshops. Also on our page, find the latest, up-to-the-minute listings on upcoming talks and events. Just log on to Facebook and type “Friends of Archaeology” into your search bar.
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Events

WEAVING CULTURE

Master weaver and educator Chris Lewis from Zuni, Marcus Monekirit of the Heard Museum, and Mary Weahkee of OAS organized a basketry class at CNMA

The idea for this class took root during a conversation with Marcus Monekirit from the Heard Museum in Arizona. I mentioned Chris Lewis, a master weaver and educator in the Zuni community, from whom I had learned yucca weaving technologies. A member of the Perishable Textile Project, Chris Lewis has been reviving weaving technology for his village. The three of us put together a yucca basketry class, with Dr. Eric Blinman’s blessings, and we were able to bring in 17 weavers from various villages, including San Felipe, Jemez, Santa Clara, Zuni, and Hopi.

The class began with the gathering of 50 yucca plants. Fortunately, Karen Wening of the Office of Archaeological Studies had property in need of yucca removal. Every leaf of each plant had to be cleaned. This took the entire first day, since a single yucca plant can produce 180 to 200 leaves. We saved the roots and learned how to process them into soap. Narrow leaf yucca makes wonderful laundry soap but should not be used for washing hair as it causes extreme itching of the scalp. The flower stalks were collected by Marlon Magdalena’s wife and would later be processed into flutes.

We split the leaves at the bulb of the plant on the second day, moving upward toward the narrow end and saving the fine delicate leaves left after the split. These would be used to tie the basket to a supporting hoop. The class began the process of weaving plaited mats using a diamond-within-a-diamond pattern. Each mat required 50 to 75 leaves. Being taught not to waste, the class put extra leaves to the side. These would be used for the string-making portion of the OAS education outreach program.

The third day consisted of the manufacturing of the basket hoop. The class chose to make the hoops from natural materials, so we took a walk outside and selected branches from one of several sumac plants here at the Center for New Mexico Archaeology. As an artist who uses natural material, it is such a nice feeling to have a source right outside the door.

I believe bringing these types of classes to OAS enriches the lives of both our staff and the general public who are invited to observe. Basketry is a true art, and several pueblos have lost their connection to this technology. These classes were taught with the hope that the basket making process will be passed down in various Native American communities.
My husband Rick and I have lived in New Mexico’s enchanted land for just over six years. At the beginning of our residency, we really didn’t know a darn thing about the Southwest, and we were particularly ignorant about the Native people of this region, of their millennia-deep history and astonishing spiritual connection to this spare and lovely land that so recently became our new home. Over those few years, we’ve learned a lot about the Ancient Ones. We now know that they were, and are, everywhere. We’re accepting of that fact and grateful to be living side by side with them. Our lives are richer for their constant presence.

On Thursday, June 20, we and several other like-minded people participated in this OAS field trip to become acquainted with some of the history of the Present People living in La Merced del Pueblo de Abiquiu.

As we learned, their history here is complicated. In 1754, a community land grant was given to 34 genizaro (detribalized Native American) families by the Spanish government. In 1841, this community held land was divided into family owned plots by the Mexican government, which took control of the area in 1821. The concept of family owned land was upheld again when the American government took control of the region in 1846. However, the American government also held that the unused land grant property was essentially public land and was, therefore, available for distribution to anyone. In 1909, the 16,000 acre La Merced land grant was validated after a lengthy court battle, and a final patent was issued upholding the grant.

On the sweltering mesatop due east of Abiquiu, sprinkled with ancient lava rocks and offering jaw-dropping views in every direction, our group slowly walked with Danny Sosa-Aguilar, excavation director and a Ph.D. candidate from the University of California, Berkeley. We were joined by Bernardo Archuleta, an adult Pueblo representative and the liaison between the La Merced community and the university for this multi-year archaeological project. Additionally, there were several teen-
GARDENS

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aged Pueblo youths who have been Danny’s steadfast archaeological assistants for the past two summer seasons. They help with the physical work of walking up to and off the mesatop, carrying archaeology gear—Monday through Friday—and assisting Danny with investigative work while on top of the mesa. These teens share social knowledge with Danny, while he teaches them about archaeological methodology including land transect determination, GPS coordinate work, and X-ray spectrometry, which he uses to confirm obsidian origin and pottery sherd identification.

These youths are a critical part of this project, as the University of California and the Pueblo want this ongoing investigative work to be “…community-oriented archaeology.” Danny says, “It is vital to recycle the knowledge within the community.” In this way, the past lives of the Ancient Ones are meaningfully brought forward into the lives of the Present Ones, ensuring that this knowledge will become a permanent part of the collective Pueblo history.

Additionally, Danny wants to learn the stories and oral history of the local people in order to acquire a more comprehensive social understanding. He will meld the social and physical evidence in his dissertation.

His work is monitored by Bernardo, who was chosen to work closely with Danny by the Merced Board. Board members want physical evidence of what they have always known about their people’s history.

Up on the mesatop, we saw the still largely intact physical evidence of the industry and genius of the Ancient Ones who constructed, planted, and maintained an extensive grid garden between 1250 and 1450 AD. It was just one example of the how the Ancient Ones made their presence known to Rick and me, as we and our OAS group walked respectfully across their precious land, admiring the care and ingenuity that they employed to help ensure a steady food supply for their community members. Some of the field trip participants speculated that Poshuouinge Pueblo east of Abiquiu Mesa on Highway 84 may have been the residential site of the people who constructed the grid gardens that we observed, but that could not be confirmed by Danny without additional research.

In the summer of 2018, Danny and his team conducted a land survey of the mesatop and mapped the GPS coordinates of all of the grid garden plots. They also identified a possible field house to investigate further in 2019.

On Thursday, June 20, a Friends of Archaeology group, above and left, became further acquainted with some of the history of the Present People living in La Merced del Pueblo de Abiquiu.

At the time of our visit, Danny and his young team had begun limited excavation within the gardens. Our group learned, from viewing and hearing Danny discuss the open pit that his Pueblo student assistants had excavated in a corner of one grid square. Danny wanted to reveal the stratigraphy within. The pit had been excavated to 50 cm, showing three distinct layers.

At the end of the day, as we walked down the steep side of the mesa and back to our cars, Rick and I were aware of how the Ancient Ones had reached out to us once again, with evidence of their civilization still so abundantly clear up on Abiquiu Mesa. We silently thanked them for the honor of being able to walk among their inspiring and still largely intact grid gardens during this very special visit.
Make your mark on NM Archaeology!

Please consider supporting the Office of Archaeological Studies by making a gift to education or research by check, credit, stock, IRA rollover, or planned gift this year.

Your tax-deductible donation through the Museum of New Mexico Foundation will have a lasting impact throughout the state. One hundred percent of your donation will be directed to the Office of Archaeological Studies. No administrative fees are charged.

Give online: www.museumfoundation.org/support-archaeology.

For questions about giving, or to donate, contact Celeste Guerrero, at (505) 982-6366, ext. 116, or via e-mail at celeste@museumfoundation.org.

Pottery Firing

Ulysses Reid of Zia Pueblo visited CNMA in August to demonstrate the Ancestral approach to firing black-on-white pottery as well as contemporary Zia pottery firing techniques.