

THE EVOLUTION OF CALIFORNIA ARCHAEOLOGY: ANCESTOR/DESCENDANT RELATIONSHIPS

SANDRA E. HOLLIMON
DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES
SANTA ROSA JUNIOR COLLEGE

This is a personal recollection of influential individuals and theories in California archaeology. I use the framework of evolution to describe the relationships between ancestors and their descendants in an intellectual genealogy. This is intended to describe persons and perspectives that have been important in my development as an archaeologist, rather than a comprehensive history of the discipline of California archaeology. Finally, I include the names of several of California anthropology's early women researchers, who have not traditionally been considered as influential individuals in our discipline.

INTELLECTUAL GENEALOGY

How do our teachers influence our theoretical perspectives? How do these in turn impact the way we perform archaeological research? Participants in the plenary session were asked to consider these questions and provide our perspectives based on personal experiences. I chose to approach the topic of intellectual genealogy within an evolutionary framework of cultural transmission. In this piece, I discuss the importance of ancestor and descendant relationships within California archaeology generally, and in my own development as an archaeologist specifically.

ANCESTORS

Franz Boas may rightly be considered the “Father of American Anthropology.” He founded the first anthropology department at an American university, at Columbia in New York in 1896. Alfred L. Kroeber was Boas' first doctoral student at Columbia, and he later became the first professor in the U.C. Berkeley Department of Anthropology, which was founded in 1901, and was the second such department in America. Boas provided two important theoretical and methodological foundations that are principles critical to anthropological practice. His theoretical view of cultural relativism insisted that cultures, their practices and views, and the people who embody them, must be understood within their own cultural context. This perspective is the primary way in which ethnocentrism can be combatted. The other foundation, the participant observation method, is what sets the discipline of anthropology as distinct from other social sciences that examine human behavior.

Phoebe Apperson Hearst can similarly be considered the “Mother of the University of California.” As a University Regent, Hearst's interest in establishing a program in anthropological research at the university was aided by her vast financial resources. Hearst provided all funds for salaries, facilities, and research in the department until 1906. As her first hire, Kroeber would become the “Father of California Anthropology.”

Following Boas, Kroeber began his research program in California by practicing what came to be known as “salvage ethnography,” attempting to document cultures (and especially languages) before their presumed disappearance. His culminating work, the *Handbook of the Indians of California* (Kroeber 1925), is still an important source in the anthropological literature. Another major figure in the early days of the Berkeley department was Robert Lowie, whose research focused on Plains Indian cultures. For a large part of the twentieth century, the Museum of Anthropology bore his name.

One of the most accomplished students of Kroeber and Lowie was Julian Haynes Steward, who earned his doctorate in 1929. Steward's formulation of cultural ecology as a theoretical framework would come to influence generations of Americanist anthropologists and archaeologists. As a counter to

nineteenth century unilineal cultural evolutionary schemes, Steward's emphasis on culture-as-adaptation became one of the most widely adopted theoretical orientations in North American archaeology. Respondents to an SCA survey of influential theories ranked cultural ecology as the most important theoretical perspective, with 38 percent stating that they identified closely with this approach.

Steward also continued employing ethnographic information in his archaeological research, authoring "The Direct Historical Approach to Archaeology" (Steward 1942). Many archaeologists working in North America before World War II employed some version of this approach, which was based on the notion that ethnographic information could be employed to interpret the archaeological record of (presumed) ancestral cultures in the same regions (see Lyman and O'Brien 2001).

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN CALIFORNIA ETHNOGRAPHY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

When Samuel A. Barrett was awarded U.C. Berkeley's first anthropology Ph.D. in 1908, his research was one of the earliest examples of incorporating salvage ethnography in the direct historical approach. His dissertation, "The Ethno-geography of the Pomo and Neighboring Indians," documented locations and place names throughout much of Sonoma, Lake, and Mendocino counties, and is still used by archaeologists to help identify sites.

The direct historical approach continued to be used in some version throughout most of the twentieth century, although critiques pointed out some of its flaws (see Lyman and O'Brien 2001). Its main use in contemporary California archaeology is to point out that the ethnographic record can be a source of hypotheses that can be tested with archaeological data. It is also an important reminder that archaeologists must work in consultation with descendant communities.

Barrett's study has influenced my work in identity formation and maintenance. In particular, the relationships between language, location (ethnogeography), and identity are central in my research. Several Pomoan languages feature constructs equivalent to "person from" as indicators of language and geographical location, and serve also to denote what we might refer to as ethnic identity (McLendon and Oswalt 1978). For example, the Kashaya are the "people from on top of land," while Europeans traveling in sailing vessels were the "people from under the water" (McLendon and Oswalt 1978:278). This is the essence of tribelet (village community) sociopolitical organization, which Kroeber identified as the typical form of organization in the California culture area.

ANCESTORS, DESCENDANTS, AND IDENTITY FORMATION

Perhaps the most important ancestor-descendant relationship was that between Kroeber and Robert Fleming Heizer. Heizer earned his doctorate under Kroeber's supervision in 1941 and went on to become one of the most influential archaeologists in western North America. He trained several generations of California archaeologists, many of whom became professors in the University of California and California State University systems, and founded the University of California Archaeological Survey. Heizer anecdotes circulated around the department during my undergrad years at Cal. Among the printable ones was that Heizer wanted to have more publications than his teacher and mentor, Kroeber. Depending on the way one counts them, it remains to be calculated as to the "winner" of that contest, but it is clear that their combined scholarly output was truly colossal.

Kroeber died in 1960 and I was born in 1961. Heizer died in 1978 and I entered U.C. Berkeley in 1979. My main influence in archaeology at Cal was Jim Deetz, whose specialty was historical archaeology, especially in the eastern U.S. My formal education in California archaeology did not begin until I became a student of Mike Glassow at U.C. Santa Barbara. At the beginning of my teaching career, I had the good fortune to work with Dave and Vera Mae Fredrickson, and spent many wonderful times at their house and at the SCA meetings discussing various aspects of California archaeology. I feel particularly honored to have had the privilege of teaching California prehistory at Sonoma State for many years, following in Dave's footsteps.

WOMEN IN EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY CALIFORNIA ANTHROPOLOGY

Oral histories of the U.C. Berkeley anthropology department provide background about the obstacles faced by female students in the first half of the twentieth century. Kroeber was resistant to admitting women graduate students because he felt that they would not be able to find academic employment if and when they completed their studies (Buzaljiko 1996:xv). In contrast, George Foster (who received his Ph.D. in 1941) stated that Lowie was very helpful to the female students and deserves the credit for supporting these students to their successful completion of doctoral research (Buzaljiko 1996:xv). Kroeber became an encouraging figure after the female students demonstrated their serious commitment (Buzaljiko 1996:xv).

Kroeber's support was limited to the women who wished to conduct ethnographic research. While he generally did not support the students pursuing archaeological research, he was particularly antagonistic toward women who wished to become archaeologists. Kroeber's opinion was that women were only interested in male archaeologists, not the discipline itself (Beals 1977:95-96). Despite these difficulties, several notable women earned their doctorates from U.C. Berkeley, largely conducting research with Native California cultures.

Anna Hardwick Gayton did ethnographic research among the Western Mono and Yokuts, receiving her doctorate in 1928. She was the first woman to earn a Ph.D. in anthropology at U.C. Berkeley. The second was Lila Morris O'Neale, who in 1926, at the age of 40, enrolled as a graduate student in household arts. Kroeber recognized the quality of O'Neale's scholarship and professionalism, and suggested in 1929 that she study the material culture of the Hupa, Yurok, and Karok of northern California. Her dissertation, "Yurok-Karok Basket Weavers," was published in 1932 (Schevill 1988).

Dorothy Demetrapopolou Lee was the third, completing research on the Loon Woman myth among northern California Indians. After graduating in 1931, she taught at Vassar (Buzaljiko 1996:xv). Cora Du Bois received her Ph.D. in 1932. She conducted salvage ethnography on the Wintu Indians and wrote her dissertation on girls' adolescence ceremonies. Du Bois published *The 1870 Ghost Dance* in 1939 and was the first woman to teach anthropology at Harvard (Buzaljiko 1996:xv). Isabel Truesdell Kelly was the fifth, who also earned her doctorate in 1932. Her dissertation research was on the Native cultures of the Great Basin, and she did extensive ethnographic research with two Coast Miwok consultants during the 1930s (Buzaljiko 1996:xv). A notable undergraduate student was Erminie Wheeler, who received her B.A. in 1923. She and her husband, Charles Voegelin, conducted ethnographic research in California, and she published *Tübatulabal Ethnography* in 1938. In addition, she was the first woman to earn an anthropology doctorate from Yale.

As was noted by a number of plenary session participants, there was an absence of women listed in the survey results of significant mentors who have influenced the theory and practice of California archaeology. I believe that this primarily reflects the age and generation of most of the currently active California archaeologists. As a student from 1979-1990, there were very few women that I encountered in senior positions in California archaeology, particularly in academic positions. With the recent establishment of the Women in California Archaeology committee of the Society for California Archaeology, it is my hope that more women can be mentored by this now-senior generation of female California archaeologists.

The most important ancestor in my own identity formation as a California archaeologist was Phil Walker. Phil was the most generous mentor that anyone could have. He was unstinting in his support, and freely shared his time and knowledge with anyone who asked. He is greatly missed, and I dedicate this personal recollection to his memory.

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