

c o m m o n

Ground

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Reaching the PUBLIC

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Ancient American History for All Americans

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Since the first decades of the European settlement of this continent, some of the new inhabitants have attempted to understand the history of the original Americans. For more than a century, these efforts have had general public and political support, including investigations by the fledgling Smithsonian Institution to resolve the mystery of the moundbuilders; systematic recording of ancient monuments and sites by the Bureau of American Ethnology, museums, and university archeologists; the popularization of ancient history by investigators such as Bandelier, Fewkes, and Hewett; and the legal protection of these resources by the Antiquities Act. Through these early initiatives, largely in the 19th century, and subsequent activities in our own century, the understanding of America's ancient history and the preservation of archeological remains associated with it have come to have special legal and public policy endorsement. Most of these efforts however, have been by a relatively small number of experts and other interested individuals.

Most European-Americans have not been inclined to look back at the ancient or recent history of the Americas, or even at their European heritage. Many of the first colonists were escaping from European economic, political, or religious constraints. They were settling a "new world," a world that to most of them had no history. This perspective we know now was totally incorrect, but it has colored the American view of history for centuries, reaching even to our own times. My parents' high school history books (e.g., D.S. Muzzey's *A History of Our Country*, Ginn and Co., 1936-1946) devoted two paragraphs of a 906-page text to American Indians and their history before the arrival of Europeans. The high school text I used in the 1960s was not much more informative. Richard B. Morris' *Encyclopedia of American History* (enlarged and updated edition, Harper and Row, 1970) takes a dozen pages in its initial chapter to describe the original peoples of the Americas before describing the rest of American history in the next 800 pages.

In the 1990s, as my children worked their way through elementary and secondary school, they and their classmates spent a bit more time on the subject. In Virginia, where they both attended school, the statewide standards of learning (Board of Education, Commonwealth of Virginia, 1995) call for fifth graders to be able to describe the first Americans,

their origins, how they lived, and some of the better known Indian cultures: Inuit, Anasazi, Northwest Coast, moundbuilders, and Eastern forest tribes. Eleventh graders are to understand the characteristics of Indian cultures at the time of European contact and the results of that encounter.

Thus, from the late 1940s to the 1990s, we detect some progress; however, there still is relatively little about ancient America that is part of standard public education. There is much to do in this arena. America's early history receives far less instruction time, reading, and class discussion than ancient Egypt, Greece, or Rome. Almost any other history topic gets more attention.

“There are thousands of years awaiting review and reflection—awaiting to be embraced by all Americans.”

There is no inherent barrier to keep modern Americans—no matter what their ethnic background—from embracing America's ancient history as their own. The immediate roadblocks to widespread understanding are the paucity of appropriately "translated" technical archeological data and the lack of widespread means of conveying up-to-date, interesting information about the subject. Archeologists and anthropologists are making inroads as they work with educational systems at the state and local levels. These efforts need to continue and expand. Efforts must also be undertaken to reach Americans who are no longer students, in particular through the mass media.

Many Americans are intrigued by the ancient history of the continent—despite their lack of direct biological or cultural relationship—as well as with preserving its remains. They have good reason to make this legacy their own. An anchor to the past, in this case one embedded in place rather than biology, helps individuals balance their modern life through reflection and comparison.

The approach of 2000 is calling forth increasing reflection about where we have been as a people, as well as where we are going. When casting back to consider the past, Americans ought not to limit their view to the past 500 years, when European Americans came to dominance. There are thousands of years awaiting review and reflection—awaiting to be embraced by all Americans.

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Above: Boy Scouts conduct a survey.
Cover: Native Americans and local volunteers excavate post-holes of an ancient structure at the 14th century Shamrock Ruin, north of Tucson, one of the few remaining settlements of its kind in the area.
Public education helped create a unique partnership of Native Americans, concerned citizens, commercial interests, and local government.

Perhaps We May Hear Voices Brian Fagan 14
Our grandchildren may one day know the joy of experiencing the past, and then again, they may not. It comes down to changing attitudes about what we stand to gain—and lose.

Center of Change: Trends in Education at the Center for American Archeology Harry Murphy 18
Education is changing today, as it has over the last four decades. A look at the changes through the lens of a program founded in the small Illinois river town of Kampsville.

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Four years ago, the Bureau of Land Management unveiled a new program aimed at educating the public. Has it made a difference?

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An archeological consulting firm shows that education projects can take place in the midst of highway construction.

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Modern technology takes us to the 12th century Southwest.

Be Prepared: The Archeology Merit Badge Is Here Alan Skinner, David A. Poirier, Douglas L. Krofina, and Pam Wheat 38
The new badge presents an unprecedented opportunity for archeology to inform the next generation of American citizens.

Photo by Carol Ellick, Statistical Research, Inc.

DIGGINGS

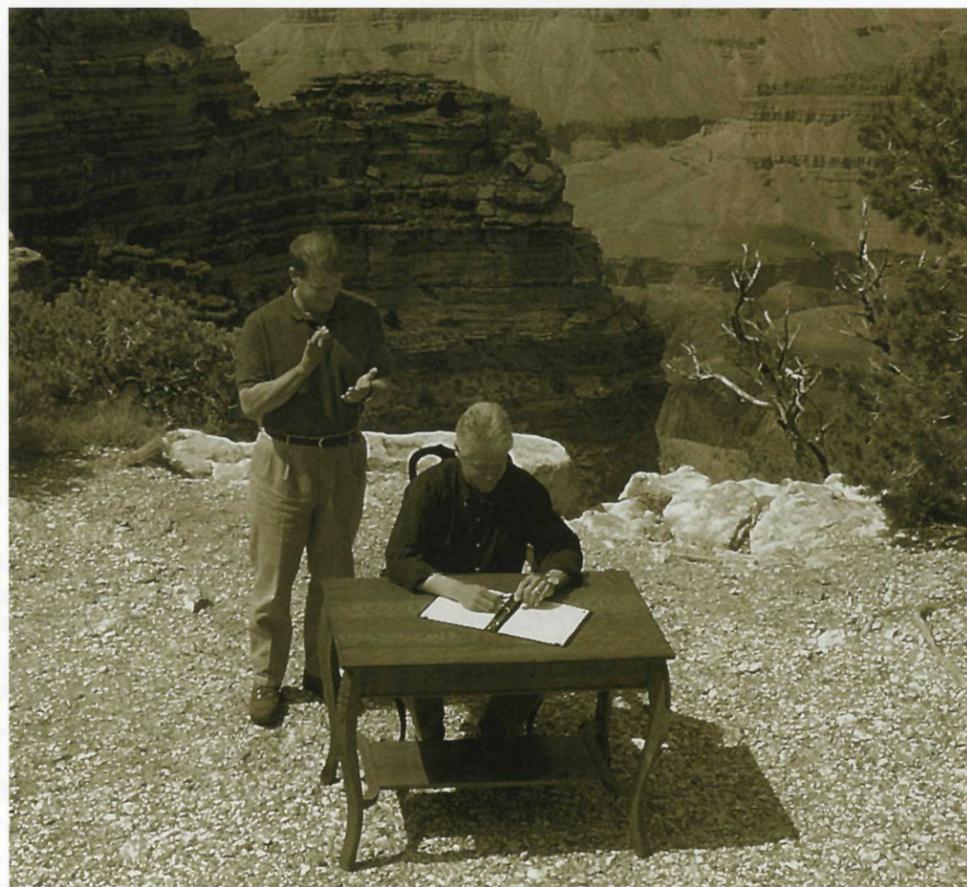
News, Views, and Recently Noted

Western Lawmakers Targeting Antiquities Act

LEGISLATION WOULD CURTAIL PRESIDENTS' ABILITY TO DECLARE MONUMENTS

President Clinton's designation of the 1.7 million acre Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument in Utah has sparked a movement in Congress to curtail the presi-

At the edge of the Grand Canyon, President Clinton signs an order creating Utah's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument.



GREG GIBSON, AP

dent's authority to declare monuments under the Antiquities Act of 1906. When the monument was declared in September 1996, there was an outcry from western legislators, who claimed it ran contrary to Utah's interests and was intended to curry favor with environmentalists.

In October 1996, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 1127, "The National Monument Fairness Act." Under the bill, the president could not proclaim monuments exceeding 50,000 acres in one state in a single year. Also, for any monuments over 50,000 acres, the president would have to consult with governors, state legislatures, and prior congressional approval. Any monument declared by the president would be abolished after two years if it were not approved by a joint resolution of Congress. The bill, introduced by Senator Jim Hansen (R-UT), passed by a narrow 229-197 vote, a margin too small to override a presidential veto, which appears likely.

In February of this year, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held hearings on similar bills introduced by Senators Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Frank Murkowski (R-AK). Administration officials told the committee that Clinton would veto the legislation.

According to a spokesman for the National Parks Conservation Association—a 500,000 member non-profit organization that opposes the bills—the meeting was "good news." He claimed that even the laws' support-

ers acknowledged that they weren't likely to pass.

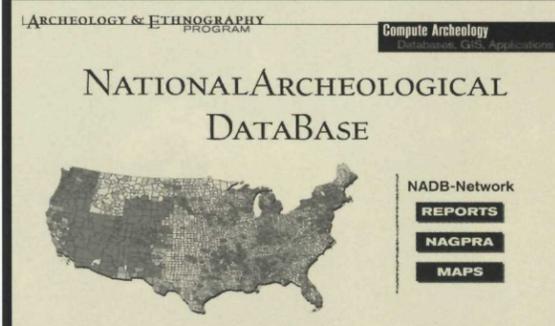
Proponents of the bills have argued that monument proclamations have gotten away from the Antiquities Act's original purpose of preserving those lands that contain "historic landmarks . . . prehistoric structures, and other objects of historic or scientific interest." There have also been arguments that Grand Staircase was not under any kind of imminent threat and that the authors of the act had intended that parcels of land that are declared monuments be as small as necessary to encompass what was being protected.

The Hatch bill proposes that any designation over 5,000 acres would have to be presented to the respective state for a 90-day comment period. It would go to Congress for the same amount of time for study. The Murkowski legislation requires a similar comment and review process and also gives Congress the final say. According to Al Eisenberg, NPCA's deputy director for conservation policy, pro-

National Archeological Database Updated

The three modules of the National Archeological Database have been updated recently on the Internet. The Reports module, a bibliographic inventory of reports on archeological investigation and planning across the US, has now doubled to about 240,000 records.

NADE's NAGPRA module has been significantly improved. There are now over 250 notices of intent to repatriate and notices of inventory completion documents. Since it is increasingly difficult to find a specific notice, a search engine has been set up in each notice directory to search by tribe, museum, or other keyword. Also, a document category called submissions has been added to provide information on museums and federal agencies that have submitted inventories and summaries to the NAGPRA



NADE-Reports can be searched by state, county, type of work, cultural affiliation (i.e., Cree, Late Woodland, Pueblo), keyword, material, year of publication, title, and author. Two options are now available for the type of reference information returned after a search. The standard reference type provides a bibliographic citation in the American Antiquity format. The expanded reference type uses the American Antiquity format and includes information on where the report is stored and the lead agency that sponsored the project.

review committee since September 1997. NADE-MAPS, a library of GIS maps showing national distributions of cultural and environmental resources, has three updated maps. These are based on the updated records in NADE-Reports. All NADE modules are accessible via the World Wide Web at www.cr.nps.gov/aad/nadb.htm. NADE-Reports and NADE-NAGPRA are also available via telnet at: [cast.uark.edu](tel:cast.uark.edu) or 130.184.75.44. At the login prompt, type "nadb" in lowercase.

posed monuments of any size would require congressional involvement. Citing the Antiquities Act's original intention to respond rapidly to threats to public lands, he describes the proposed laws as "akin to call-

ing a meeting of the city council in order to put out a fire." The Antiquities Act, signed by Theodore Roosevelt, has been used by 13 presidents to ensure the protection of places that were

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