

J. C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology



Douglas D. Scott

Douglas D. Scott is the recipient of the 2015 Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) J. C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology. The award was presented to Dr. Scott in January at the 48th Annual Conference on Historical and Underwater Archaeology in Seattle, Washington, in recognition of his lifetime contributions to scholarship in historical archaeology, pioneering work in battlefield and conflict archaeology, and in the application of archaeological methods to forensic studies, dedication to the mentoring of students and young professionals, and his collaborative approach to research.

Douglas D. Scott was born in Bethany, Missouri, on 17 July 1948. He was the first of two sons of Helena Frances (Dowell) and Edwin L. Scott. His family lived in and around Bethany until 1957, when his father accepted a job as vice president of a small bank in Independence, Kansas. Doug spent the next 10 years of his life in southeastern Kansas, graduating from Independence High School in 1966.

Challenged with a series of health issues in childhood that prevented him from normal outdoor play activities, Doug spent many hours haunting local libraries, reading whatever came to hand on archaeology and history, and talking with “old timers” about their memories of local history. Those early interests and readings made him decide at age six to be an archaeologist. To the amazement of his parents, he never wavered from the idea, and he kept his local and school librarians scrambling to find books on the subject.

Education and Early Career

While in high school, Doug volunteered on his first archaeological project in the summer of 1964. That experience, learning to shovel skim on an excavation for a reservoir salvage project in southeast Kansas for the Kansas State Historical Society (KSHS), was the catalyst that affirmed his determination to make archaeology a career. It was at the Elk City Reservoir Project that he met, for the first time, another Kansas boy, P. Willey, who went on to become a well-known physical anthropologist and professor at California State University, Chico. The two connected later in life at the Little Bighorn Battlefield and went on to collaborate on two books and a number of articles (Glenner et al. 1994; Scott and Willey 1995, 1996, 1997; Willey and Scott 1996; Willey et al. 1996; Scott et al. 1998).

After graduating from high school in 1966, Doug got his first paying job in archaeology as a shovel bum for the KSHS on the Elk City Reservoir Project. In 1967, he worked again for the KSHS at Perry Reservoir, where he received training in mapping and additional field techniques.

Doug decided he was not yet ready for the big college adventure when he graduated from high school and opted instead to attend Independence Community Junior College, where he graduated with an associate of arts degree in June of 1968. That summer he enrolled in the University of Kansas, Kansas State University, and Wichita State University Great Plains Archaeological Field School at White Cloud, Kansas. There he gained additional experience in excavation, mapping, and other field techniques. During this field school, he participated in the excavation of a Kansas City Hopewell site, a Woodland burial mound, and worked on his first historical period site, a Sac and Fox burial that was eroding out of a corn field (Scott 1976). He was hooked on historical archaeology after that. To put this in context, the SHA was officially formed and held its first annual meeting in Williamsburg, Virginia, that same year (Cleland 1993).

The fall of 1968 saw Doug enrolled at the University of Colorado as a junior. What would become a career-long dedication to professional service can be traced to his early years at Colorado, when he served in 1969–1970 as president of Anthropos, the undergraduate anthropology club.

In 1969, Doug attended the University of Colorado field school at Mesa Verde and surrounding areas. Since Doug had two years of paid dig experience and one field school already under his belt, he was assigned to work on independent crews excavating in Mancos Canyon on the Ute Mountain Reservation and conducting site survey on the Southern Ute Reservation, as well as at Mummy Lake on Chapin Mesa.

The summer of 1970 saw Doug as the field foreman at the Jurgens site near Kersey, Colorado, a Paleoindian bison-kill and -processing site. He graduated with his bachelor's in anthropology that June, then took a year off to establish residency in Colorado so that he could attend graduate school at an affordable cost. Doug began his graduate studies at the University of Colorado in the fall of 1971 and graduated with his master of arts in anthropology in 1973. In 1974, he was admitted to full membership in Sigma Xi.

Doug's master's thesis was on the archaeology of Fort Larned, Kansas, which at the time was undergoing restoration by the National Park Service (NPS) (Scott 1973, 1989). The restoration work at Fort Larned required a good deal of archaeology, and the NPS awarded contracts to the University of Colorado and Doug for that work from 1972 through 1974. The variety of features and buildings tested and excavated provided the basis for Doug's dissertation work, also at Colorado, which he completed in 1977 (Scott 1977).

At the conclusion of the 1974 Fort Larned work, and having completed all but his dissertation, the Oklahoma Historical Society (OHS) hired Doug as the curator of Fort Towson Historic Site in southeast Oklahoma. Doug's daughter Barbara was born in nearby Hugo, Oklahoma, in 1975. Though only at Fort Towson for a short while, he completed excavations and reports on two projects: the powder magazine and the commanding officer's quarters and privies (Scott 1975, 1983b). He also oversaw the accurate reconstruction of one of the barracks at nearby Fort Washita. It was at Fort Towson that he met University of Tulsa undergraduate anthropology

majors William Lees and Tim Jones, both of whom volunteered on Doug's excavations in the summer of 1975. Another long-lasting friendship was formed with William, eventually resulting in collaboration on Civil War and Indian Wars battlefields in Oklahoma (Lees et al. 2001).

Department of the Interior

In the fall of 1975, Doug resigned from OHS to take a federal job in Colorado. He was hired as the first Bureau of Land Management (BLM) District Archaeologist in Colorado, stationed at Montrose. There he did a variety of cultural resource management (CRM) projects over the next eight years. One of his major accomplishments during that time was working with BLM State Archaeologist Gary Matlock and Bureau of Reclamation Archaeologist Ward Weakly to create, design, and secure funding for the Anasazi Heritage Center (AHC). The BLM created the AHC to house and interpret archaeological materials from the Dolores Archaeological Project and surrounding BLM lands (Scott 1983a). Today it is the headquarters for the Canyon of the Ancients National Monument and a premier museum and interpretative center in southwestern Colorado.

In 1983, an opportunity arose for Doug to move to the NPS Midwest Archeological Center (MWAC) in Lincoln, Nebraska. There he was a division chief for CRM work in what was then the Rocky Mountain Region, encompassing the states of North and South Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, Colorado, Utah, and part of Arizona. Doug worked on or supervised project work in most of the park units in those states. His greatest claim to fame was the happy byproduct of his 1983 move to the NPS, where his first project assignment was to assess archaeological needs following a range fire at Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, Montana, then called Custer Battlefield National Monument (Scott et al. 1989). The rest, as they say, is history. His work there, along with Melissa Connor and Richard Fox, captured the public imagination and the attention of the press, catapulting their archaeological work onto both the national and international stages. The incipient beginnings of the field of battlefield or conflict archaeology rolled out of the work at Little Bighorn. Doug continued doing battlefield archaeology by working at Little Bighorn every season for 23 years.

Doug also directed and assisted with numerous other battlefield and conflict-site investigations in the United States, England, Cuba, and Belgium. These included NPS projects, as well as other outside collaborative endeavors, such as the Washita Battlefield (now Washita National Historic Site) and Honey Springs Battlefield (OHS) with William Lees.

In another convergence, the work at the Little Bighorn and the discovery of soldiers' skeletal remains brought Doug and wife Melissa Connor into contact with Clyde Snow. Snow did an exceptional analysis of those remains, but also cajoled Doug and Melissa into taking the methods they had developed in battlefield recovery to the field of forensic science. Clyde's statement that they should take their methods to a "real" battlefield led them to work for Physicians for Human Rights (PHR) and the United Nations (UN) El Salvador Truth Commission (1992), the UN Truth Commission for Former Yugoslavia (1993), the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Former Yugoslavia (1996), the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (1995 and 1996), the U.S. State Department on a case in northern Cyprus (1997), for PHR on the Greek side of Cyprus (1999), and for the Regime Crime Liaison Office in Iraq (2004 and 2006). Melissa shifted from prehistoric and historical archaeology to full-time forensic archaeology in 2000. She now directs the Forensic Investigation Research Station (FIRS) for Colorado Mesa University in Grand Junction.

In 1996, with an NPS reorganization, Doug became the program leader for the Great Plains at MWAC. He continued as a supervisory archaeologist working on and overseeing projects in parks in Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri, Minnesota, Arkansas, and the Dakotas. He also continued to work outside the Midwest Region, helping other parks and agencies when requested. Doug has worked in 15 different states and at 55 national parks, monuments, or historic sites.

Concurrent with his service to the Department of the Interior, Doug began a long relationship in 1984 with the University of Nebraska, Lincoln (UNL) that ended only after his retirement

and move to Colorado. In various capacities, he taught classes, served on over 30 master's and doctoral committees, and helped direct several field schools in western Nebraska with UNL colleague Peter Bleed. Throughout his career he also lectured to public audiences, to avocational archaeological societies, and to business and professional groups. Notable here is his 1988 England lecture tour on the archaeology of the Little Bighorn, with presentations at Cambridge University; the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst; Durham University; Sheffield University; the University of Newcastle upon Tyne; the London Borough of Havering; and the Manchester Borough of Staleybridge.

Doug retired from the NPS in January 2006 after 31 years, 4 months, and 23 days of credited service to the Department of the Interior. Since his retirement, Doug has stayed active in the field. With his move to Colorado he has become an adjunct instructor and visiting research scientist at Colorado Mesa University, and he continued his affiliation with UNL until 2012. He has also continued work in the forensic field, assisting Melissa with some casework for local law enforcement. In 2011, he helped direct excavations and the mapping for the Whistler, British Columbia, sled-dog animal welfare case with the British Columbia Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Just a few months before receiving the Harrington Medal, he convinced a crew of aging colleague-volunteers to join him in the search for the Civil War camp of the 1st Colorado Volunteer Infantry at Fort Union National Monument, New Mexico.

Lifetime Achievements

The J. C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology recognizes a lifetime of contributions to the discipline centered on scholarship. The record of achievement by Dr. Douglas D. Scott amply qualifies him for this award. In fact, no other historical archaeologist comes close to matching the scope and quality of his considerable contributions to the specialty of 19th-century military-sites archaeology, particularly battlefield investigations and forensic archaeology with an emphasis on the analysis of firearms and ammunition used in conflicts.

During his many years in government service, Doug worked on a variety of sites in the Great Plains and Rocky Mountain West, and published widely on the results of those investigations. He has appeared in 28 television documentaries and written, coauthored, or coedited 11 books. Doug has an extensive resume of book chapters; peer-reviewed journal articles; encyclopedia entries; agency or organizational monographs; CRM reports; forensic archaeology and human rights, and firearms-related reports and publications; publications on military history and material culture; and book reviews. He has delivered close to 100 papers at scholarly meetings, about one-quarter of which were at SHA conferences.

Doug helped found the Colorado Council of Professional Archaeologists and served as its first president; he also was a founding member of the Nebraska Association of Professional Archaeologists, for which he later served as president. In addition, he served on the board of directors of the Plains Anthropological Society and was co-chair of the 3rd International Battlefield Archaeology Conference (Nashville, Tennessee). Most significant, perhaps, since joining SHA in 1972 Doug has served as the 1983 conference program chair (Denver, Colorado); chair of the Awards Development Committee (1988–1989), Procedures Manual Development Committee (1988–1995), and Ethics Committee (2000 and 2001); served on numerous other committees; was twice a member of the SHA Board of Directors (1987–1989 and 1998–2000); served as president-elect in 2005; and was the first two-year president in 2006 and 2007.

Most notable was his work on military fortifications, including Fort Towson, Fort Larned, Fort Laramie (Scott et al. 1992), and Fort Smith (Scott and Hunt 1998, 2000; Coleman and Scott 2003), and his work at more than 40 battlefield sites. In addition to Little Bighorn, he directed work at Big Hole Battlefield National Historical Site, Sand Creek National Historic Site (Scott 2000b; Greene and Scott 2004), Wilson's Creek National Battlefield (Scott 2000a, 2006a; Scott et al. 2007), Pea Ridge National Battlefield Park (Carlson-Drexler et al. 2008), and Monroe's Crossroads Battlefield (Belew and Scott 1997; Scott and Hunt 1998). His work at other

battlefields, including collaborative work with additional organizations and colleagues, included Mescal Springs, Arizona; Milk Creek and Summit Spring, Colorado; Black Jack and Ivan Boyd Prairie, Kansas; Booneville, Centralia, Island Mound, and Moore's Mill, Missouri (Scott, Dasovich et al. 2014; Scott, Thiessen et al. 2014; Thiessen et al. 2014); Bear Paw, Montana (Scott 2001); Rush Creek, Nebraska (Scott et al. 2011); Glorieta, New Mexico; Honey Springs and Washita, Oklahoma; and Santiago de Cuba (Bleed and Scott 2005).

Doug's best-known efforts, however, relate to the Little Bighorn Battlefield, where George Armstrong Custer and his men met their end. Indeed, Scott has authored or coauthored some 50 publications on that site alone. In their preliminary report on the Little Bighorn, Doug and coauthor Richard Fox, Jr., first codified what is today accepted as the standard methodology for conflict archaeology (Scott and Fox 1987). Conflict archaeologists refer to this seminal work affectionately as "The Book." Doug has continued to refine the methodological approach to conflict archaeology, often in collaboration with other scholars, in many subsequent project-related and synthetic papers and publications. Doug's most recent book on Little Bighorn archaeology, *Uncovering History: Archaeological Investigations at the Little Bighorn* (Scott 2013), received the United States Literary Award in Anthropology/Archaeology in 2013, and in 2014 the Little Bighorn Associates John M. Carroll Book Award and the Custer Battlefield Historical and Museum Association G. Joseph Sills Book Award.

As the leading figure in conflict archaeology, Doug developed several innovative methods for the investigation of battlefield sites, especially related to the systematic use of metal detectors, electronic mapping techniques, and forensic analysis (Connor and Scott 1998; Scott 2006b, 2014a; Bleed and Scott 2011; Espenshade et al. 2012; Scott et al. 2012; Spude and Scott 2013). His work in historical archaeology has led him to become a technical advisor to the Association of Firearm and Tool Mark Examiners and a fellow of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. His methods have been widely adopted by others in the field and serve as a model to a new generation of scholars engaged in such undertakings.

His contribution to conflict archaeology was not only innovative, but it was the foundation for the establishment of conflict archaeology as a respected part of historical archaeology (Fox and Scott 1991; Scott 1996, 2002, 2005, 2009, 2014b; Scott and McFeaters 2011). In his nomination testimonial, Steven Smith (2013) noted: "Doug Scott has done what Stan South did for the entire discipline of historical archaeology; that is raising conflict archaeology to a level of theoretical and methodological sophistication representative of a mature discipline that contributes significant insight into human conflict."

Whereas archaeologists had long excavated forts and fortifications, some of which were associated with battlefields, actual investigations of the battles themselves were deemed not suited to systematic archaeological inquiry, due to their scale and the dispersed nature of related archaeological data. Further, the tool that would become central to conflict archaeology—the metal detector—was associated with the unsystematic looting of sites and was not taken seriously as a tool of ethical archaeology. That all changed with Doug Scott and his amazing study of the Little Bighorn fight. Although Doug drew many collaborators into this and subsequent studies (one of his hallmarks as a professional), including metal-detector hobbyists previously scorned by professionals, he was the driving force in this study and in establishing a clear and effective method now enshrined within conflict archaeology. If the Harrington Medal's namesake is the father of historical archaeology, Doug is indeed the father of modern conflict archaeology.

Doug's success in battlefield archaeology was not due only to his identification of tools and development of a methodology, in his wide collaboration with other scholars, or in embracing expert volunteers. Key was his ability to showcase the interpretive power of the approach. Using sound scientific reasoning and teasing out sophisticated data from battlefield artifacts, Doug presented to the scholarly community compelling interpretations of events that addressed longstanding historical questions and that commented on questions of broad anthropological interest and importance. That he was a career public servant in the NPS probably compelled him to take the next important step, which was to offer a clearly understandable explanation

of this scholarship and findings to the general public through publications and other media. In his Harrington testimonial, Peter Bleed (2013) noted: “Doug made scholars and the lay public excited about the role archaeology could play in understanding battles and past human conflicts. And as a result of Doug’s research, historical archaeology grew and a new generation of scholars were drawn to the field.”

Very much related to and growing out of his work on battlefields has been Doug’s forensic studies. Perhaps most important among his forensic research projects has been the investigations he carried out at the behest of several international organizations. Applying archaeological methods, Doug aided with the disclosure of evidence in war crimes cases at locations around the globe. In addition to his reports of findings produced at mass graves and other sites, Doug was called upon to give expert testimony at trials and international tribunals, including, in 2006, the successful trial and conviction of Saddam Hussein for crimes against humanity perpetrated while he was leader of Iraq.

It is in Doug’s nature, it seems, to collaborate and also to mentor students and young professionals. The number of practicing professional historical archaeologists who have been influenced by Doug, helped along the way, and who carry in their professional tool bags lessons learned from Doug is substantial. As W. Stephen McBride and Kim A. McBride (2013) said in their testimonial: “Doug has been a leader and mentor to many of us working on military sites. He has always been available to offer advice, comment on and edit articles and reports, and of course add a bit of Doug’s humor when needed.” P. Willey (2013) noted that “Doug’s willingness to acknowledge accomplishments of his co-workers and tout their insights are renowned. ... His ecumenical outreach to many disciplines and scholars of diverse expertises sets high standards of inclusiveness.”

Doug’s work and research has been recognized repeatedly. He was elected a fellow of the Center for Great Plains Study in 1987. He received a literary medal from the Orders and Medals Society of America in 1997; a Certificate of Achievement, Intermountain Regional Office, NPS for the Sand Creek Project in 1999; an NPS CRM Award for the Sand Creek Project in 2001; and the Leslie Hewes Award (co-recipient with Peter Bleed) for the best social-science article published in Great Plains research in 2009. Doug was recognized in 2009 for his work with the PAST Foundation, receiving its Founder’s Award and the Outstanding Service and Innovation Awards. The Department of the Interior honored him with its two highest awards: the Meritorious Service Award in 1999 and the Distinguished Service Award in 2002 for his career achievements, including the creation of the Anasazi Heritage Center and his work in battlefield and conflict archaeology. It is fitting, in light of his career achievements in scholarship, that the SHA—which has been Doug’s professional home—be added to this list.

Dr. Douglas D. Scott’s lifetime contributions to scholarship in historical archaeology are clear, significant, sustained, and deserving of recognition by the SHA by award of its highest honor: the J. C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology.

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