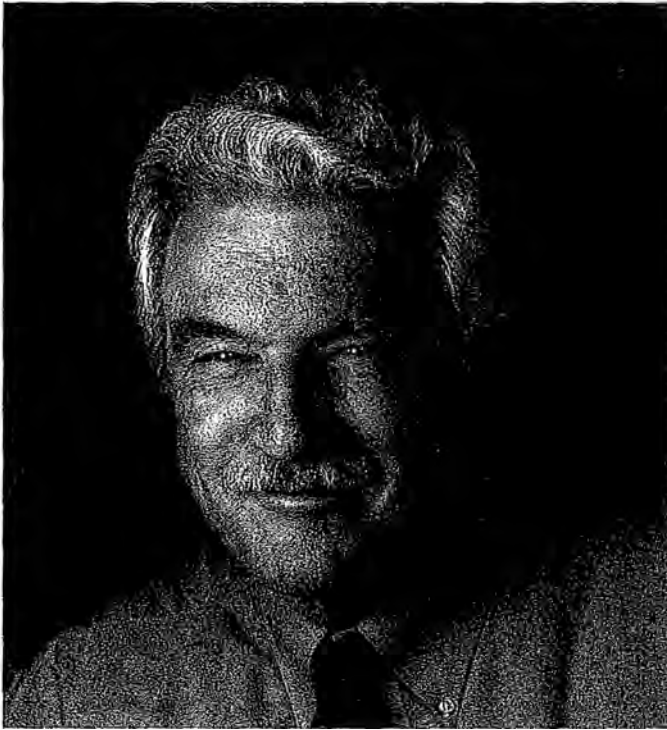


## J. C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology



James Edward Ayres 2008

James Edward Ayres's long career in archaeology has been dominated by difficult and continual struggles to promote the value of historical archaeology within the archaeological establishment and with the public. Perhaps his battles have something to do with Ayres working in the American West, particularly Arizona, where prehistoric archaeology and its spectacular material culture are so well entrenched, but perhaps it is due to his insistence that archaeologists take a considerably broader perspective of the past. Throughout his career, he has tirelessly advocated for the preservation of the archaeological record in all its dimensions, insisted that the highest research standards be applied to all archaeological sites, and especially argued that historical period sites and material culture must hold a place of special importance in explicating the past.

His publications are numerous and varied. Ayres has written about sites, material culture, and historical topics from the Spanish colonial period through the 20th century. His works on the historical archaeology of Native Americans in Arizona, vernacular architecture, mining, logging, urban archaeology, and the archaeology and history of the Chinese in Tucson have become classics. Few archaeologists have contributed as significantly to historical archaeological scholarship in cultural resource management reports in the western United States.

While it is true that many of us in The Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) share Ayres's values, his career is replete with examples of how he fought to establish historical archaeology as a respected profession. The acceptance that our discipline now enjoys with the public as well as the other branches of archaeology is, to no small degree, due to his firm professionalism and tenacity. It is for these qualities—his unflagging service to SHA, his commitment to the profession

of historical archaeology, and his broad-ranging and lasting scholarly contributions—that James Edward Ayres is awarded the J. C. Harrington Medal in 2008.

Jim was born in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, on 30 September 1936. His father, Wayne, was a farmer who worked in several localities in the Eau Claire area. In 1943, the family moved to eastern Colorado, where Wayne managed one of his uncle's ranches. In the ensuing years, the Ayres family moved back and forth between Colorado and Wisconsin several times, but they settled permanently in Evanston, Wyoming, in 1950. Here Wayne started a new job as an independent logger in the high country of the Uinta Mountains along the Wyoming and Utah border. Wayne's new career was very much a family affair, involving his four sons and their mother, Alice, all of whom worked side by side in the woods. Because he was too young to handle the very heavy chain saws of that era, Jim spent summers removing limbs from fallen trees with an ax. This was not only physically demanding work but also lonely as well. Jim did not always appreciate spending the summers of his teenage years in the isolation of the family's lumber camp.

Jim graduated from Evanston High School in 1955 and immediately joined the U.S. Air Force. After basic training, he worked in the USAF Security Service, an electronic-intelligence-gathering organization. After a busy and exciting four years in intelligence work, Jim enrolled at Fresno State College in California, where he received a B.A. in Anthropology in 1963. During his undergraduate years, he became involved in his first archaeological fieldwork through a project in central California. This experience led him to decide upon a career in archaeology, and in 1963 he began graduate work in anthropology at the University of Arizona, where he earned a master's degree in 1970.

At the University of Arizona, two pioneers in historical archaeology influenced Jim: Arthur Woodward, who introduced him to the discipline, and Bunny Fontana, who taught him the importance of documentary research. Jim now joins both of these mentors as a fellow recipient of the J. C. Harrington Medal. As a graduate student, Jim got involved with the anthropology department's Grasshopper Archaeological Field School, for which he was hired as the assistant director (1965–1967). During the same period, he was assistant archaeologist at the Arizona State Museum (ASM) in Tucson. An outgrowth of his work at Grasshopper was his pioneering and often reprinted 1968 article with William Longacre, "Archeological Lessons from an Apache Wickiup" (*New Perspectives in Archeology*, S. R. Binford and L. R. Binford, editors, pp. 151–159, Aldine, Chicago), one of the first forays into the historical archaeology and ethnoarchaeology of Native Americans. The article was based on a paper presented at the Society for American Archaeology meeting in 1966.

In 1967, it became apparent that urban renewal plans for the downtown area of Tucson would threaten the archaeological record that documented the community's founding and development from its Spanish roots through the 1920s. In cooperation with the Tucson Urban Renewal Office and demolition contractors, Jim organized an archaeological salvage program to recover as much data from these occupations as possible. Eventually, Jim, along with 150 university student volunteers, excavated 200 privies, wells, trash dumps, and other features, recovering more than one million artifacts. In those days, the Tucson Urban Renewal Project (TUR) provided the only avenue available for undergraduate archaeological field training at the University of Arizona. Because the project was badly underfunded and involved huge collections of historical period artifacts, it was not a popular project with some of the staff at ASM. Nonetheless, Jim's project was among the first and largest archaeological urban renewal projects in the entire nation and the first of its type to receive funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Renewal. TUR also produced some of the best information on the Spanish colonization of the American Southwest as well as the early Chinese and Anglo-American communities of Tucson.

In 1970, Jim was promoted to associate archaeologist at ASM and in 1978 became head of its research division. He held this post until 1979, when he resigned to become Arizona's State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), a position he held until 1981. He later became an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Anthropology at Arizona State University (ASU) and subsequently an adjunct lecturer in the anthropology department at the University of Arizona. In both cases, he often provided the only instruction available to students interested in historical archaeology. His courses drew, and continue to draw, large enrollments.

It can certainly be said that Jim has always viewed his teaching as a professional responsibility and a service to students, rather than as a career path or as a means of supporting himself financially. Teaching was a duty he assumed in addition to many other competing responsibilities. He and Teresita Majewski frequently team-teach classes and seminars in historical archaeology, and several times per year they go on the road with hands-on workshops on historical period material culture and documentary research, which have been presented at Arizona Site Stewards meetings, Arizona state historic preservation conferences, meetings of the Arizona SHPO's Historical Archaeology Advisory Committee, and other state-level archaeological venues. Jim is determined to introduce professionals and avocational archaeologists alike to the full range of historical period material culture so that sites dating from the contact period onward can be correctly identified, dated, and interpreted. He is also keenly aware of the value of curated collections, and students in his most recent seminar on historical period material culture analyzed artifacts related to a mid-19th-century military post that had been sitting untouched in storage for almost 40 years at ASM. The outcome of this analysis will be a publication featuring the research conducted by the students.

Over the years, Jim has shown a deep commitment to The Society for Historical Archaeology, serving on the Board of Directors (1972–1975 and again 1992–1995), as president in 1977, as a member of the Editorial Advisory Committee for *Historical Archaeology* (1978–present), as an associate editor for the journal (1988–1993), and as a member of the Dissertation Prize Subcommittee (2001–present) and as chair since 2003. Besides serving on many other SHA committees, he has represented SHA on the Society of Professional Archeologists (SOPA) board (1983–1987) and on the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation's International Centre Committee (1975–1982).

His professional service does not end with SHA. Other professional organizations have benefited from his participation. For example, he was the secretary-treasurer of the American Society for Ethnohistory (1971–1979), a member of SOPA's Membership Committee in 1976 and 1977, president of the Arizona Archaeological and Historical Society (2004–2007), board member on the chapter and state levels of the Arizona Historical Society (1998–2003), and advisor from Arizona to the National Trust for Historic Preservation (1973–1982). Since 1988, he has served as an advisor emeritus to the trust, a position that attests to his wealth of knowledge in historic preservation.

While serving on the Arizona SHPO's Advisory Committee on Historical Archaeology since its inception in the late 1990s, he contributed to a statewide context for identifying, documenting, and evaluating historical period refuse deposits. Jim is the lead compiler (with Carol Griffith and Teresita Majewski) of *Historical Archaeology in Arizona: A Research Guide*, an online publication of the Arizona SHPO that is updated frequently <[www.pr.state.az.us/partnerships/shpo/archyguide.pdf](http://www.pr.state.az.us/partnerships/shpo/archyguide.pdf)>. He feels strongly about volunteer projects such as these, because they provide the background for the appropriate scholarly treatment of archaeological resources from the historical period.

On the local level, Jim has been involved in countless preservation activities. An excellent example is his service on the Tucson-Pima County Historical Commission as member (1990–1998) and chair (1992–1998). Because Tucson is a certified local government, the commission is the body responsible for addressing review of city and other projects, especially those in National Register districts. In his years on the commission, he constantly worked to raise awareness of Tucson's rich historical archaeological heritage to the level where it clearly became an important concern for city and county officials and administrators. This awareness is especially crucial given the rapid growth of the city and its environs over the past decades. His work on the commission's Plans Review Subcommittee, which is tasked with reviewing projects proposed in city historic districts and National Register districts, honed his approach to preservation of architectural resources and their importance to a comprehensive approach to considering historical archaeological sites in his own research. In 1995, Jim's contributions to historic preservation in its many forms at both the local and state levels were recognized when he received the commission's highest accolade, the Alene Dunlap Smith Award for his contributions to historic preservation, as well as the coveted Arizona Governor's Award for Historic Preservation.

It should be emphasized that Jim's considerable work with professional organizations as well as his research and teaching commitments were undertaken without the security of tenure or even

full-time employment. For much of his career, Jim assumed these responsibilities while scrambling for contracts, working on underfunded research projects, or teaching for minimum wage or as a volunteer. By these means and under these difficult conditions, he managed to make a profound contribution to the field of historical archaeology and to many young people interested in the discipline. Jim Ayres set an excellent standard for all his fellow archaeologists.

After completing his service as Arizona SHPO in 1981, Ayres began working as an archaeological consultant in earnest, participating in projects for Aztlan Archaeology, Inc.; Dames & Moore, Inc.; Archaeological Research Services, Inc.; Old Pueblo Archeology Center; Desert Archaeology, Inc.; Statistical Research, Inc.; SWCA, Inc.; the National Park Service; and ASM, among others. As an archaeological consultant, Jim has conducted historical archaeology, documentary research, and material culture analysis at a wide variety of site types throughout the western United States (Arizona, California, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah) and on ASU's Ancestry Project in east-central France.

Key projects completed by Ayres as a consultant include his work on mining, specifically his investigations of the Rosemont Mining District south of Tucson, where his research focused on the technology and operational challenges of mining and the ethnicity of the miners who lived and worked there and was published in 1984 (*Rosemont: The History and Archaeology of Post-1880 Sites in the Rosemont Area, Santa Rita Mountains, Arizona*, Archaeological Series No. 147, Vol. 3, Arizona State Museum, University of Arizona, Tucson). He has also investigated placer mining at Humbug Creek in central Arizona, copper mining and railroading in the Silver Bell Mining District near Tucson, and copper mining and ranching on Middle Pinto Creek in east-central Arizona.

Ayres also made significant contributions to one of the largest archaeological projects ever undertaken in the Southwest, funded by the Bureau of Reclamation's Regulatory Storage Division (Plan 6) of the Central Arizona Project, which focused on eight dams in the central portion of the state. He and Deborah Hull-Walski were in charge of designing and implementing the analysis of material culture recovered from construction camps associated with the eight dams. Many Apache men helped to build the Roosevelt Dam, and they lived in the associated camps with their families. His analysis of the artifacts used by the Apaches and their non-Native American coworkers provided fascinating insights into the use and reuse of art

material culture with specific ethnic groups. He contributed as author or editor to most of the reports in the multivolume series, published in the late 1980s and early 1990s, and entitled, *Historical Archaeological Investigations at Dam Construction Camps in Central Arizona*, Dames and Moore, Phoenix, Volume 3, *Laboratory Methods and Data Computerization*, coauthored with Hull-Walski, contains illustrations of more than 1,500 marks on glass, ceramics, metal, and other materials. Of all the volumes in the series, this one is found on the shelves of all historical archaeologists in Arizona and used constantly for reference when conducting artifact analysis.

Ayres has also consulted frequently on the history and historical archaeology of railroads. In 1989, he contributed to *Transcontinental Railroading in Arizona: 1878-1940: A Context for Preserving Railroad-Related Properties*, a historic context study submitted by Janus Associates of Phoenix to the Arizona SHPO; has completed in-depth historical archaeological and historical studies of Pantano and Esmond Station, two railroad communities near Tucson; and inventoried the Promontory townsites within Golden Spike National Historic Site in Utah.

Ayres's consulting work has also focused on ranches, homesteads, and townsites. From material culture analysis and historical research conducted for the Agua Caliente Ranch project, Pima County, Arizona, he was able to provide critical information used in reconstructing the architectural, landscape, and occupational history of the site (see his 2002 article "Agua Caliente: The Life of a Southern Arizona Ranch," *Journal of Arizona History* 43:309-342). Throughout the years, Ayres has become familiar with the material culture and documentary record of the Chinese who came to the West in the late 1800s, primarily to work on the railroads. His experience with Chinese material culture is extensive, beginning with the TUR excavations in downtown Tucson. His 1994 publication "The Archaeology of Chinese Sites in Arizona" (*Origins and Destinations: 41 Essays on Chinese America*, Chinese Historical Society of Southern California and UCLA Asian American

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Studies Center) provides an overview of the archaeology of the Chinese who lived throughout Arizona, working on ranches and in mining camps and urban communities.

Throughout the years, Ayres has published synthetic pieces that summarize the state of historical archaeology in the Southwest, ranging from the Spanish Conquest through the early-20th century. These have become key resources for understanding the development of historical archaeology in this region: "The Anglo Period in Archaeological and Historical Perspective," *Kiva* 49:225-232, 1984; "Historical Archaeology in Arizona and New Mexico," *Historical Archaeology* 25(3):18-23, 1991; *The Archaeology of Spanish and Mexican Colonialism in the American Southwest* (compiler), Guides to the Archaeological Literature of the Immigrant Experience in America, No. 3, The Society for Historical Archaeology, 1995; and "Toward an Archaeology of Colonialism in the Greater Southwest" (with Teresita Majewski), *Revista de Arqueología Americana* 12:55-86.

Another example of Ayres's level of commitment to the field and to understanding the past is his decades-long study of the logging industry and its buildings, structures, and artifacts in southwestern Wyoming and northeastern Utah. He started documenting lumber camps in the Uinta Mountains in the 1960s, and today, roughly 40 years later, he spends most of the summer months continuing to locate, map, photograph, and record camps and their layouts, functions, and relationships to the environmental areas. His research focus has been on the changing nature of the architecture and the ethnicity of the loggers who occupied these camps. The insights he has gained into the formation processes of the archaeological record through longitudinal study of these sites are unparalleled. Glimpses of his findings were offered in two publications: "Historic Logging Camps in the Uinta Mountains of Utah" (*Forgotten Places and Things: Archaeological Perspectives on American History*, Albert Ward, editor, Contributions in Anthropological Studies, No. 3, Center for Anthropological Studies, Albuquerque, 1983) and "Standard Timber Company Logging Camps on the Mill Creek Drainage, Uinta Mountains, Utah" (*Proceedings of the Society for California Archaeology* 9:179-182, 1996). He is currently writing up the results of this ongoing study.

Besides his own personal history with logging, Jim is spending much of his time on this project because many of the camps are being disturbed by vandals, have succumbed to destruction by fire, or have simply fallen into oblivion because the USDA Forest Service is indifferent toward the study and preservation of these important resources. On this and other of his projects, Jim has had the invaluable assistance of his dear wife, Marianne, whom he married in 1986. Whenever Jim is found measuring an old building, you can be sure Marianne is at the other end of the tape. Both authors of this tribute have been fortunate enough to visit Jim and Marianne during the summer in Wyoming to enjoy their hospitality and visit some of the logging camps.

Significantly, Ayres has continually demonstrated throughout his career the potential importance of sites that seem to have been written off by others—isolated homesteads, ranches, mining towns, sites occupied by historical period Native Americans, and of course, logging camps. In investigating these sites, he has shown himself not only to be a master of 19th- and early-20th-century material culture but also a relentless researcher of archival and oral historical sources. A project that clearly illustrates his interest and expertise in documentary research is his painstaking reading and indexing of more than 300 topics of relevance to historical archaeology that appear in the four Tucson newspapers dating from 1870 to 1912. He recently received a grant to have these materials prepared for publication so that they can be of use to other researchers.

This brief summary of the career of Jim Ayres has only touched upon his deep and lasting contributions to the historical archaeology of the American West, for which he has received the J. C. Harrington Medal. For more than 40 years, he has focused on promoting historical archaeology through tireless service as well as broad-ranging and lasting scholarly contributions. For Jim, service and scholarly contributions are inextricably linked in a circle of cause and effect. He has never been a self-promoter, but his work has inspired countless others to pursue service and scholarship in historical archaeology.

CHARLES E. CLELAND AND TERESITA MAJEWSKI