

## **Notes from the Field Section Editors' Introduction: Shaping Community during the Practice of Archaeology**

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Two years ago, the editors and staff of the *Arizona Anthropologist* realized that we were in a unique position to address and publish untraditional accounts of anthropological research. As a student-run publication geared towards student-authored submissions, we could provide an outlet for discussions about the processes of becoming and being anthropologists. Rather than waiting for the finely tuned and carefully honed results of research, we would focus on articles discussing the act of research itself. The nature of our discipline—the study of people—makes our field research difficult to plan and impossible to control. Frequently, fieldwork veers from the methods outlined in carefully composed grant proposals to better account for the realities of the research setting and social dynamics affecting the project. Following the path charted by Angela Storey in Issue 24 of the journal, we sought to compile a collection of “Notes from the Field” that forefront the experiences of archaeologists during fieldwork. Where the socio-cultural pieces in Issue 24 featured the complicated representations of “self” and “other,” this issue of Notes From the Field highlights the complex relationships that form within research groups, amongst these groups, and with other interested communities.

Archaeological research is collaborative, bringing together a group of professionals and students in a variety of settings across the world. Fieldwork is inherently difficult, often involving less than ideal living situations and very little to no private space. Eight hours of physical work in the field are frequently followed by evenings filled with cataloging artifacts, completing field records, and/or cooking and cleaning. Placing groups of individuals within these settings creates unique contexts of social interaction that teach flexibility and camaraderie.

Learning how to be in the field is not something written in the introduction of archaeology textbooks. Instead, we learn fieldwork in the same way we further our research goals: socially and, hopefully, with good mentors. As is illustrated in the articles from this issue, positions in the field are frequently learned through practice and observation. We learn what these roles entail and how to fulfill their requirements well through observations of others we deem "good" in the field and then we do our best to mimic them. Oftentimes these successes are not the people who excavated the fastest or found the most projectile points, but those who demonstrated teamwork, affability, and optimism in their everyday interactions. At the University of Arizona, we are lucky to have a number of mentors worthy of emulation, foremost Dr. William A. Longacre.

### **An Exemplar of the Community: Dr. William A. Longacre**

In 2015, the School of Anthropology (founded as the Department of Archaeology in 1915) at the University of Arizona observed its centennial with a full year of celebrations. The events carefully planned and executed over the course of the year emphasized the strengths of the School of Anthropology community. The format of this celebration followed a pattern established during the 75th anniversary by then head of the department, Dr. William A. Longacre. Sadly, Dr. Longacre passed away in November of 2015, just a month after speaking at a field school symposium held for the centennial (for the official obituary written by Michael W. Graves, James M. Skibo, Miriam T. Stark, and Michael B. Schiffer, please visit the following: <https://anthropology.arizona.edu/news/william-atlas-longacre-ii-december-16-1937-november-18-2015>).

Throughout the events before and after his death, mentions of Dr. Longacre's name were frequent. His impact on the School of Anthropology and the discipline of archaeology—particularly in terms of ceramic analysis and the field of ethnoarchaeology—cannot be overstated. While these feats of research are more than impressive, what is most striking are stories of Dr. Longacre's personal relationships and mentorship of students and colleagues. To honor his kindness and

generosity—a contribution that should not be overlooked in academia—this issue of the *Arizona Anthropologist* is dedicated to the memory and spirit of Dr. William A. Longacre.

On May 14th, a memorial organized by Dr. Michael Graves was held for Dr. Longacre at the University of Arizona. Students and colleagues traveled across the country to attend and commemorate their mentor and friend. Several of the speakers from this event, as well as other colleagues, allowed us to publish their remembrances of Dr. Longacre in this issue. Dr. Graves relates the impact that Dr. Longacre had on him throughout his career, beginning during his time as a field school student at Grasshopper. Through mentorship and the occasional well-placed phone call, Dr. Longacre consistently supported Dr. Graves with pride and enthusiasm. Dr. Miriam Stark shares her memories from a year of fieldwork in the Philippines. During this time, Dr. Longacre's personal qualities endeared him not only to his students, but also to the Kalinga with whom he worked. Dr. Michael Schiffer recounts his time with Dr. Longacre at the University of Arizona, first as a student and then a colleague. In both positions, Dr. Schiffer sought and valued the counsel of Dr. Longacre as a supportive and generous friend. Dr. J. Jefferson Reid and Dr. Stephanie M. Whittlesey relate their version of how Dr. Longacre acquired the nickname of "Uncle Willy." They credit his geniality and wit for the adoption of this familiar moniker, which stuck from the 1970s to the present day.

Finally, Dr. Dana Osborne, a recent graduate of the University of Arizona, describes her interviews with Dr. Longacre for a student's memorial and the School of Anthropology's Oral History project ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NN\\_pf0srGsI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NN_pf0srGsI)). Dr. Osborne leaves these interviews moved by Dr. Longacre's excitement and investment in the people around him. While these pieces are personal recollections of individual relationships, they all communicate an admiration for and aspiration to the high standards of excellence exhibited by Dr. Longacre. This excellence was found not only in formal publications and lectures, but in the generosity, compassion, and mentorship exhibited in everyday interactions with students, colleagues, and members of the local community.

### **Fieldwork Communities and their Impact on Research and Researcher**

In addition to the remembrances of Dr. Longacre, this issue contains eight articles discussing aspects of fieldwork and the communities in which it occurs. The majority of these were authored by archaeologists, with one contribution each from socio-cultural and linguistics that provide a juxtaposition of experiences in these sub-disciplines. While each submission is unique, they all touch upon the importance of social relationships to the success of fieldwork.

The first articles discuss the realities of fieldwork throughout several stages of a project. Leslie D. Aragon details her experiences working as the Field Director for the Upper Gila Preservation Archaeology field school. In what she describes as a "microcosm," students from across the country come to learn how to do fieldwork, but also how to be in the field, as evidenced by the "unwritten" rules of camp life. Teaching in this context extends beyond techniques and methods to "life skills" as many students are dealing with their first time camping and living away from home. Victoria Moses relates her transition from field seasons to study seasons. Every country has its own laws and standards for the treatment and transport of archaeological artifacts, frequently requiring that they stay within the country. Moses, who works in Italy, now spends the majority of her field seasons in the museum analyzing animal bones from excavations. The disjuncture of this solitary work with most ideas of archaeology can make the transition difficult, but it is a necessary and time-consuming part of the process. Moses highlights the benefits of study seasons, but also emphasizes the need to stay visible and involved with the community of archaeologists that are excavating the material she studies. While fieldwork can take many forms, it is ultimately shaped by interactions within the communities built by each project.

The context of the field as a place to experiment is the focus of the next two articles. Kayla Worthey highlights the importance of the field setting for sparking creativity and interpreting data. Based on her fieldwork on a Paleolithic site in

France, she argues that the framework of the field—researchers gathered in close proximity for several weeks—provides the concentration of likeminded and interested individuals necessary for furthering research. For Worthey and her colleagues, the parallels between their camp experiences and the social lives of the Neanderthals they study makes it easier to imagine what life would have been like for these occupants. While many of these speculations will never be made public as they are based on questions that are difficult if not impossible to answer, Worthey celebrates the ability to think creatively with others in this setting. Alternately, Ismael Sánchez-Morales details the luck involved in Paleoindian archaeology, which seeks to identify the oldest inhabitants of the Americas. He works on a site, El Fin del Mundo, in Mexico discovered by a ranch owner by chance in the 1970s. Following years of patient and detailed excavation by a team of archaeologists, the site has been definitively dated to the Clovis period circa 13,000 years ago. Despite the high risk of failure, Sánchez-Morales and his colleagues persevered and were ultimately successful in dating the site. While many ideas and excavations may not result in publications, the field—the place and the community—allows for collaborative attempts to change what we think and know about the past.

Our third set of submissions details the intricate relationships between different interest groups that impact fieldwork. Jessica MacLellan shares her experiences while conducting fieldwork in Guatemala over the last several years. Framing herself as a perpetual student who learns through practice, MacLellan navigates her changing positions from student to field director to outreach volunteer within an active, and occasionally tumultuous, local community. She highlights the complicated intersections and divergences among the interests of researchers, Guatemalan officials, and rural villagers making claims on overlapping resources and land. Ultimately, MacLellan does not offer solutions to these complex issues, but encourages communication and the need to continue to learn with and from the contexts in which we work. In a similar vein, William A. White, III describes the interactions among the many stakeholders involved in the River Street

Archaeology Project, a community-based public archaeology project in a historically black neighborhood of Boise, Idaho. Along with involving descendent communities a framework to share and explore their histories, the project provides a context for discussions of race and racism with the larger Euroamerican population of the city. White outlines the history of the neighborhood to explain the complexity of relationships with the area. The public nature of the work led to interest from students, volunteers, and visitors with different expectations and backgrounds. The project attempted to meet the needs of these groups through community involvement and education, highlighting the importance of archaeology for understanding the past, including aspects of the past and present that may be difficult to discuss. While relationships with groups outside of a project can be complicated, MacLellan and White highlight the benefits to knowledge and understanding that can educate both researchers and local communities.

The final two articles address the realities of solo fieldwork in other countries and the differences between how one sees themselves and how they are seen by their research participants in these contexts. Joshua Meyer presents his experiences conducting linguistic fieldwork as a foreigner in Kyrgyzstan. Despite careful and detailed planning prior to his trip, he encountered several hurdles in convincing potential research participants to trust him. While initially successful with individuals known from prior trips, the political climate of the country and Meyer's position as an outsider deterred many potential participants. Upon reflection, the personal, social, and political implications of recording everyday conversations become clearer to Meyer, as well as the importance of having a personal connection—in this case through his research assistant—to gain entry to new communities. Samantha Grace relates her experiences first as a pregnant woman and later as a woman with an infant doing fieldwork in Ecuador. The physical effects of pregnancy altered her interactions with her research subjects in minor ways, but her increased concern for the health and safety of her child most prominently affected her approach. Charting her concerns, Grace navigates her changing self and situation within her research community. While

returning to the field with an infant did change specifics of her plan, she comfortably situates herself within her new position as mother and anthropologist. While very different experiences in the field, Meyer and Grace both highlight the changing perspectives of their role as researcher and their relationships with their research participants throughout their fieldwork.

### Final Thoughts

Fieldwork serves as a rite of passage for archaeologists. Students attend field school with the understanding that they will afterwards know whether or not they want to pursue this major and career. However, these decisions are rarely based on excavation and survey skills themselves. Instead, field schools reveal whether or not students are able to handle the intense social contexts, the constant need for flexibility, and the importance of optimism and good humor on even the hottest days in the dirt. These qualities, when observed in a mentor, have the greatest impact on our approach to research and fieldwork. It is telling that the remembrances of Dr. Longacre highlight social interactions and his generosity for others. These personal qualities were ones to be emulated and aspired to by students and colleagues alike. As such, Dr. Longacre leaves a legacy far greater than his research through his example of how to be a good anthropologist and foster a positive research community.

Notes from the Field are not formal, peer-reviewed research articles. While they are reviewed and edited by the editorial board of *Arizona Anthropologist*, the pieces are personal reflections on individual experiences. As such, little attempt is made to alter the stylistic choices of the authors. Diversity in writing, along with diversity in experiences, are instead celebrated. We thank all of the contributors to this issue for their willingness to share their experiences and memories with us and others. As academics, we are trained to professionalize our work, which can make the personal nature of these submissions difficult to compose and publish. It is our hope that readers recognize this unique opportunity to view the social—and often messy—side of research and that it opens a dialogue concerning the complex social negotiations that structure our fieldwork experiences.