
RESEARCH PAPER

Labouring in the Fields of the Past: Geographic Variation in New Deal Archaeology Across the Lower 48 United States

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New Deal archaeology survey and excavation projects across the lower 48 states exhibit considerable geographic variation in their nature and extent. Part of this variation can be linked to strong regional personalities, while other variation depended on local political acceptance of or resistance to New Deal programs. The nature of the archaeological record itself influenced the amount of New Deal archaeology within a region. These factors are considered in the discussion of when and where work relief archaeological projects were conducted in the United States during the Great Depression.

Introduction

Shortly after his inauguration on March 4, 1933, U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his administration actively moved to create a series of bold government initiatives—collectively known as the New Deal—to address chronic and high unemployment rates associated with the Great Depression (1929–1941), as well as a host of other economic, political, and social ills (McElvaine 1993; Watkins 1993). The New Deal included a series of work relief programs designed to provide jobs that did not compete with existing “normal” business activities. Work relief jobs were also perceived as a way for people to earn a living doing something meaningful for their local communities and their nation—a welcome alternative to the social stigma associated with relying on judgmental private charities or a very limited government dole (Watkins 1993: 126). New Deal jobs programs required people to start working swiftly, and preference was given to funding projects that were ‘shovel ready’ and expended most funds on labor rather than on other costs, such as equipment (Setzler 1943: 210).

Many New Deal work relief projects involved labor-intensive construction efforts focused on building the nation’s infrastructure (Taylor 2008), but the arts and literature were not ignored (Dickstein 2009; Hirsch 2003; Mangione 1972; Penkower 1977; Quinn 2008). The Roosevelt administration engaged in a concerted effort to promote America’s past through heritage tourism marked by striking posters and detailed city and state guidebooks, the latter sprinkled with historical details (Carter 2008; Everson 2011; Hobson 1985). More serious

Scholarly efforts to preserve America’s past included recording narratives of former slaves or their children, tracing epithets eroding away on centuries-old grave markers, and transcribing fragile historic documents moldering away in the nation’s attics and basements (Hefner 1980; Johnson 2013; Shaw 2003). Archaeological investigations on a then unprecedented scale took place throughout the U.S., involving many localities and time periods that were ignored in the preceding decades—and some still are (Dye 2015; Fagette 1996; Lyon 1996; Means 2013a, b).

At the beginning of the Great Depression, archaeologists were few in number, had access to limited funding, and were scattered across the U.S. in museums, institutions of higher learning, government agencies, and local or state avocational archaeological or historical societies (Fagette 1996; Hawley 2006: 487–490; Schroeder 2013: 166–167). Archaeology was slowly emerging from its antiquarian roots, and many individuals were amateurs with a passion for the past but little formal training (Dunnell 1986: 28). The U.S. government employed a few archaeologists from various agencies, especially the Smithsonian Institution and the National Park Service (Schroeder 2013: 172).

The nation’s scattered archaeologists quickly realized that they could benefit from the thousands of laborers made available by New Deal work relief programs. Drawing on Federal Emergency Relief Excavation (FERA) funds, pioneering excavations by Smithsonian Institution archaeologists at Marksville Mound, Louisiana, in March 1933 (Lyon 1996: 1) proved that a small number of trained archaeologists could handle large numbers of unskilled laborers (Setzler 1943: 207). Many of these workers were unfamiliar with archaeological techniques but were intimately acquainted with the basic digging equipment,

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such as trowels and shovels—which they sometimes had to provide. A dramatic transformation took place among American archaeologists as they scrambled to develop and formalize procedures suitable for directing large, untrained field crews, and to teach a new, expanding generation of archaeology students that would manage those crews (Dunnell 1986: 28; Fagette 1996; Haag 1985; Lyon 1996; Means 2013a, b; Schroeder 2013).

With the New Deal, a new age dawned for American archaeologists and American archaeology. For the first time, funding became available for archaeological investigations across the length and breadth of the then 48 U.S. states. The two largest programs that funded archaeology were the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Works Progress Administration (WPA). The precursor to the WPA, the short-lived Civil Works Administration (CWA), also funded archaeology projects, as did the National Youth Administration (NYA), the Public Works Administration (PWA), the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the aforementioned FERA (Fagette 1996; Lyon 1996; Means 2011a, b). For the decade following the Marksville Mound excavations, Depression-era New Deal programs provided laborers for locating, mapping, and excavating pre-contact American Indian sites of all types, as well as historic-era sites associated with American Indians but also with colonists, largely Western Europeans or enslaved Africans. Many investigations of historic-era sites emphasized important places or homes tied to events and people associated with America's founding (Fagette 1996; Johnson 2013; Lyon 1996; Pykles 2011; Means 2013a, b; Setzler 1943).

New Deal funding was available for addressing local archaeological interests, as long as those interests coincided with places where individuals—mostly men—needed work. While many New Deal archaeologists had at least rudimentary research questions in mind as they pursued their investigations, the first and foremost goal of any relief excavation was to ensure their field crews were steadily employed. Surveys and excavations were directed toward locations of high unemployment, which were not necessarily areas of the greatest interest to archaeologists. On the other hand, this led researchers to expose the archaeological record of some areas for the first time.

The archaeological sites chosen for investigation across the nation were primarily American Indian sites, then a dominant concern for many American archaeologists. This may partly be considered as a continuation of the 19th-century emphasis on 'rescuing' American Indian culture from the destructive and corrosive onslaught of Euro-American 'civilization'. The over-emphasis on archaeological investigation of American Indian sites should not be surprising, given the relative recent development of historical archaeology as a recognized area of study within archaeology. Although archaeological investigations of historical sites certainly were done prior to the New Deal, and were certainly the subject of federal work relief archaeology, the concept of historical archaeology as a recognized field only dates to the 1950s (Cotter 1993: 9). Still, many share the view that 'Historical archaeology may be said to have come of age at Jamestown with the panned and funded investigation of the whole community

of the first permanent English settlement on Jamestown Island, 1607' under the direction of Jean C. Harrington (Cotter 1993: 7; See also Pykles 2011). Jamestown was certainly selected as a site of excavation by a work relief crew because of its preeminent place in American history and myth making. It is also worth noting that the site is on federal property. No work relief archaeological projects were conducted in Virginia outside of federal lands, presumably due to local political opposition to the New Deal (Means 2011b).

Although many New Deal archaeologists were predisposed toward excavating American Indian sites—and certainly large mound sites would keep a field crew busy for some time—they also had to deal with local and national political forces. For example, some of the investigations by the Somerset County, Pennsylvania work relief crew were directed toward a mythical early historic fort following the request of the local and influential Daughters of the American Republic. The WPA crew also investigated a natural hill thought by influential local residents to represent an American Indian mound (Means 2000). Political forces not only directed which sites were excavated on occasion, but also could have much larger impacts on New Deal archaeology projects. For example, funding for work relief archaeology was held up for nearly a year in Somerset County due to unwarranted accusations over patronage directed toward hiring crews of one political party (Means 1998).

Contributing to the somewhat freewheeling nature of New Deal archaeology was the way the U.S. government dispersed relief funds. Funds were provided to localities to spend, and control over how these monies were allocated depended on state and local governments, with often relatively minimal oversight from the federal government (Biles 1991: 105). The Smithsonian Institution and National Park Service tried to exert control over work relief archaeological projects—even those not on federal lands—but with mixed success (Means 1998). Some New Deal archaeological investigations were conducted on such a local level that federal officials would have had no notion that they even existed. Many small projects were never published, or might have seen publication in locally produced and narrowly circulated journals. Writing up results also did not employ very many people—a problem from the perspective of relief program administrators.

The manner in which New Deal archaeological projects were funded and implemented was certainly not an ideal way to generate an organized body of scholarship. Methodological developments such as the Midwestern Taxonomic System were designed to impose some semblance of order on the vast number of artifacts being generated from a multitude of sites investigated through work relief surveys and excavations (Willey and Sabloff 1993: 123–124). U.S. archaeologists also responded in part by founding the Society for American Archaeology (SAA) in 1935 as a centralized social network through which they could communicate their findings (Griffin 1985; Meltzer, Fowler and Sabloff 1986: 8). The 'Notes and News' section included in most issues of the SAA's flagship journal, *American Antiquity*, in its first decade often carried short reports about New Deal-funded work relief excavations.

These reports were all too brief, frequently vague, and their authors were sometimes anonymous. This is a frustrating situation for today's historians of archaeology and makes it difficult to track down and find additional details about these projects. And, it should be noted, not all projects relying on New Deal funding mentioned that fact—for some archaeologists, money was money and there seemed little need in their minds to mention how they obtained their funding.

The following geographic overview of New Deal archaeology contributes to the growing archaeological literature (Fagette 1996; Lyon 1996; Means 2013a) that is rescuing this important period from sometimes cursory and purely descriptive treatments, such as that in Willey and Sabloff's (1993) *A History of American Archaeology*, 3rd edition, which simply lumps New Deal archaeology into their 'The Classificatory-Historical Period: The Concern with Chronology (1914–1940)'. While they use a number of illustrations and examples from work relief projects, they really only mention New Deal archaeology on two pages, and that more to presage developments happening with post-World War II salvage archaeology (Willey and Sabloff 1993: 147–148). The role of women in archaeology, including during the Great Depression, is also increasingly addressed by scholars who have noted that some women led excavations despite the efforts of many of their male colleagues to relegate them to laboratory work (Reyman 1999; White, Sullivan and Marrinan 1999). The relatively well-known Dorothy Cross of New Jersey is considered below, as is the lesser known Helen Sloan Daniels—at least for her archaeological work in Colorado. I would be remiss in not mentioning Patterson's (1986) efforts to examine the social history of archaeology, as he provided a broader social and cultural context for Depression-era archaeology. He considered challenges to New Deal programs in general by some corporate leaders (Patterson 1986: 9) and emphasized the rise of professional archaeologists over amateurs as a consequence of government funding of archaeology (Patterson 1986: 13)—

the latter topic is also addressed by Pinsky (1992) in greater detail. Specific corporate resistance to New Deal archaeology itself is not something clearly encountered during my research, and many of the projects discussed below were run by “amateur” archaeologists and professionals working alongside one another.

Mapping New Deal Archaeology

To date, I have accumulated information on approximately 1700 New Deal surveys and excavation projects across the lower 48 U.S. states (**Fig. 1**). This effort began initially as an attempt to provide a broader context for Depression-era investigations I began researching in Pennsylvania in the early 1990s (Means 1998), but has expanded into an effort to create a more holistic perspective of when and where New Deal funds were expended to sponsor archaeological projects (Means 2011b). Row upon row and column after column of numbers and text entered into a spreadsheet proved an unsatisfactory method for achieving this perspective. Visualization of these data is needed—and a map approach is ideal. Mapping New Deal archaeology projects quickly revealed considerable geographic variation in the nature and extent of work relief archaeology projects. Some of this geographic variation was noted in the first two major overviews of New Deal archaeology (Fagette 1996; Lyon 1996). These two volumes touched on projects across the nation, but focused their attention on the intensive and extensive investigations that took place in the southeastern states. Both authors underestimated the extent to which New Deal archaeology took place outside the southeastern U.S. This is not too surprising, as the basic challenge for examining geographic variation in New Deal archaeology is the difficulty in finding out about projects that were unpublished or only published in low circulation local archaeological or historical society journals. As noted earlier, the emphasis on New Deal archaeology projects was to keep people employed—these were work relief endeavors after all—and not writing up a project's findings. This is a regrettable shortcoming of some New Deal archaeology—but artifact collections

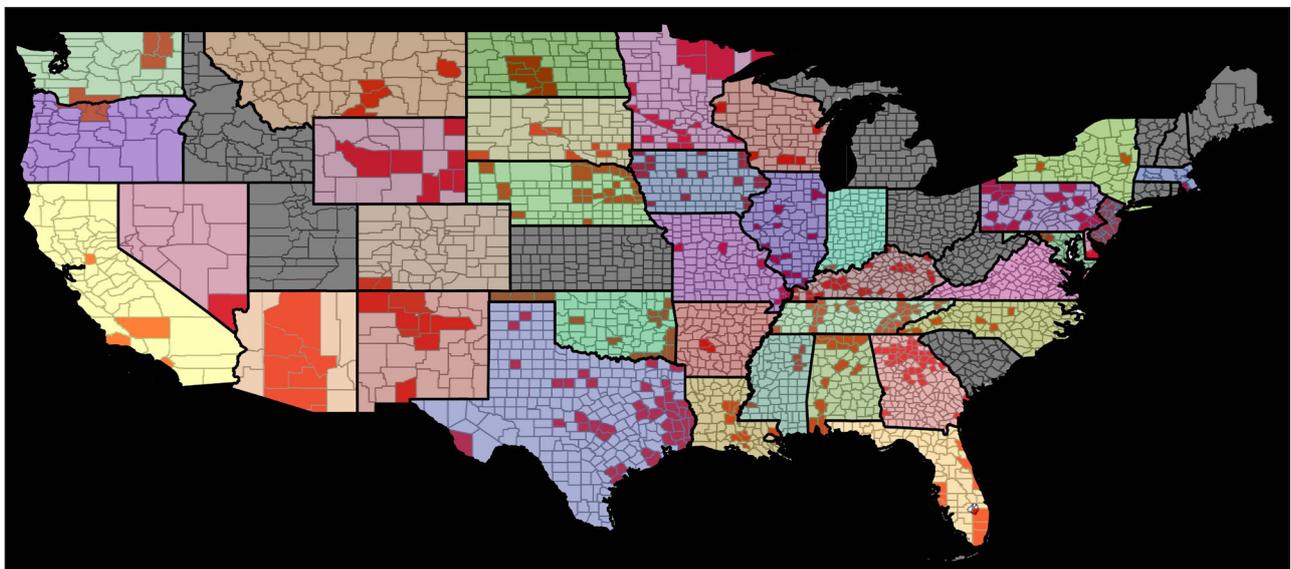


Figure 1: Map of U.S. showing states (in color) with New Deal archaeology projects, with individual counties having projects highlighted. States in gray have no known New Deal archaeology surveys or excavations.

and notes exist in museums and other repositories for researchers to study today (Sullivan, Braly, Harle and Koerner 2011; Williams, Parris and Albright 1981). There is also no central repository for the records of New Deal funded archaeology projects, although the Smithsonian Institution's National Anthropological Archives has extensive, albeit incomplete, records and reports generated from WPA investigations

Access is the major challenge to using New Deal archaeology records for historical studies or for addressing new research questions that draw on old data. Compounding this issue is knowing whether records of a New Deal excavation even exist—much less finding where the records are located. Fortunately, the transformation of paper records into digital forms makes it possible to create a national understanding of New Deal Archaeology in all its complexities. Teams of dedicated scholars are dusting off old unpublished—and sometimes unfinished—reports and making them more readily available. These efforts include placing original field records, notes, and correspondence online, allowing scholars to explore the motivations of those who undertook New Deal investigations (Sullivan and Braly 2011).

Dollars for Digging in at Least 381 Counties

Sufficient documentation exists to show that New Deal archaeology of one form or another took place in at least 381 counties across 36 of the lower 48 states. In some cases,

these were very minor efforts—a day's work at best—and, in other cases, years were spent at the same site. Tallying up the number of counties with New Deal work is certainly easier than figuring out the number of sites excavated. These 381 counties represent 12.4 percent of the 3067 U.S. counties that existed during the Great Depression. Determining work relief efforts by counts of counties certainly is not ideal, but does give a rough indicator of overall effort.

There are complicated factors that determine whether and where any New Deal archaeology was conducted in a given state. Some factors include state and local political opposition to the New Deal in general, lack of an infrastructure or interest in archaeology, or simply a decision to cut back on archaeological efforts until the economy improved. Reading (1973) provided basic information on New Deal expenditures for the period lasting from 1933 to 1939, which allows us to assess whether there was a strong correlation between overall expenditures for New Deal programs and the amount of work relief archaeology conducted in a particular state. In **Table 1**, the data provided by Reading (1973: 794) was modified on absolute allocations per state, adding three columns: total counties per state; counties with New Deal archaeology; and percentage of counties with New Deal archaeology.

The three states in the top ten of overall allocation of New Deal funds that had extensive work relief archaeology programs were New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Texas. All three states had strong state archaeologists or local

State	Rank	Dollars	Total Counties	Counties with New Deal Archaeology	Percentage with New Deal Archaeology
New York	1	4,214,632,166	62	2	3.2
California	2	3,054,808,597	58	4	6.9
Illinois	3	2,784,416,009	102	12	11.8
Ohio	4	2,548,119,820	88	0	0
Pennsylvania	5	2,512,598,632	67	20	29.9
Texas	6	2,106,916,828	254	42	16.5
Michigan	7	1,883,495,906	83	0	0
New Jersey	8	1,335,440,333	21	19	90.5
Missouri	9	1,234,146,757	114	6	5.3
Massachusetts	10	1,216,327,872	14	1	7.1
Iowa	11	1,153,236,166	99	17	17.2
Wisconsin	12	1,146,995,763	72	5	6.9
Minnesota	13	1,090,999,960	87	15	17.2
Indiana	14	1,079,307,208	92	2	2.2
Tennessee	15	901,511,069	95	31	32.6
Washington	16	824,912,180	39	5	12.8
Oklahoma	17	821,025,210	77	13	16.9
Alabama	18	819,689,440	67	14	20.9
Kansas	19	816,920,692	105	0	0
Georgia	20	793,270,890	159	38	23.9

(Contd.)

State	Rank	Dollars	Total Counties	Counties with New Deal Archaeology	Percentage with New Deal Archaeology
Louisiana	21	777,332,649	64	9	14.1
Nebraska	22	739,816,299	93	26	28.0
Arkansas	23	734,407,732	75	2	2.7
North Carolina	24	721,348,748	100	6	6.0
Mississippi	25	719,950,715	82	5	6.1
Kentucky	26	656,489,291	120	26	21.7
Virginia	27	617,423,756	95	3	3.2
Maryland	28	562,747,966	24	2	8.3
Florida	29	553,745,638	67	10	14.9
South Carolina	30	532,884,677	46	0	0
Montana	31	530,633,681	56	4	7.1
Colorado	32	524,531,880	64	2	3.1
Oregon	33	511,021,747	36	4	11.1
South Dakota	34	486,220,790	66	7	10.6
North Dakota	35	482,041,916	53	7	13.2
West Virginia	36	458,388,416	55	0	0
Connecticut	37	380,738,696	8	0	0
Arizona	38	345,077,459	15	7	46.7
Idaho	39	331,149,924	44	0	0
New Mexico	40	291,768,941	33	8	24.2
Utah	41	289,301,781	29	1	3.4
Maine	42	267,853,368	16	0	0
Wyoming	43	202,703,636	23	7	30.4
Rhode Island	44	169,393,142	5	0	0
Vermont	45	140,577,924	14	0	0
Nevada	46	136,445,094	16	1	6.3
New Hampshire	47	115,212,905	10	0	0
Delaware	48	738,12,715	3	1	33.3

Table 1: Absolute allocation of New Deal expenditures, loans, and insurance by state, 1933–1939.

residents who actively sought out New Deal funding for archaeology. I address New Jersey's Dorothy Cross and Pennsylvania's Donald Cadzow below. At least some of the archaeology done in Texas during the New Deal was thanks to the strong interest of a gentleman by the name of Fred Studer, a passionate local avocational archaeologist (Chris Lintz, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, personal communication, August 13, 2010).

However, seven of the top ten states in terms of total allocation of New Deal funds saw little or no archaeology. New York and Ohio particularly stand out among these top ten states with respect to work relief archaeology. At first glance, one would think that New York state met all the conditions for a robust work relief program at least on the level of Pennsylvania, which was immediately to New York's south. The New York state government was certainly

not hostile to New Deal programs—in fact, many were pioneered here by then Governor Franklin Roosevelt before he became president (Biles 1991: 13). New York also had a long tradition of active support for archaeology that was the envy of neighboring states. Yet, William Ritchie drew only once on PWA laborers—which he erroneously called WPA workers—in his October 1934 excavations at the early historic Dutch Hollow site (Ritchie 1954: 4). Ritchie stayed active in New York throughout the Great Depression, eschewing federal funds. There was also archaeological work by CCC crews at the Saratoga National Historical Park to uncover fortification lines and redoubts dating to the 18th-century (Starbuck 1988).

Ohio's archaeologists deliberately curtailed archaeological survey and excavation projects to ride out the Great Depression, despite a long history of interest in the

past and an active cadre of professional and avocational archaeologists. Thus, no work relief archaeology was done in this state, despite Ohio ranking fourth in total allocation of New Deal funds among the 48 states (Kardulias 1989: 114–118). However, relief funds were used in Ohio to maintain archaeological parks and staff archaeological labs, among other non-survey and non-excavation efforts (Kardulias 1989: 118).

Kansas is a somewhat interesting state from the perspective of New Deal archaeology. The state was ranked twentieth in terms of total allocation of New Deal expenditures—near the middle. Waldo Wedel (1959) did considerable work during the Great Depression in Kansas under the auspices of the Smithsonian Institution, but without drawing on work relief funds. There was an actual attempt to initiate New Deal archaeology in Kansas. Loren C. Eiseley—who taught at Kansas University from 1937 to 1944 and was the only professional archaeologist in the state—drafted a proposal for a statewide, WPA-funded, survey and testing project. But, he did this at a time when Congress changed how WPA projects were funded. The \$100 Kansas University was willing to provide toward the \$4000 cost of his project was deemed insufficient to match federal funds (Hawley 2006: 492).

Tennessee, Alabama, and Kentucky all saw a fair amount of archaeology under the TVA, but these states were similarly ranked to Kansas at 15th, 18th, and 26th respectively in terms of absolute allocation of work relief monies. One state with a low ranking and no New Deal-funded archaeology is Utah. Although much of Utah is federally owned, Depression-era excavations were absent of work relief projects and largely confined to those directed by the two major universities in the state: Brigham Young University and the University of Utah (Janetski 1997: 113–117).

Exploring America's New Deal Archaeologies

Overall, how total allocations of New Deal funds were distributed to the 48 U.S. states does not appear to have been the major determining factor for whether and to what extent work relief archaeology took place within a given state. The SAA's History of Archaeology Interest Group (HAIG) has assembled a number of scholars at recent SAA annual meetings in an attempt to provide a more nuanced historical perspective on New Deal archaeology, and to explore the continuing research potential of these investigations. A session at the 75th annual meeting of the SAAs in 2010 was designed to examine New Deal archaeology across the U.S. and not just in the southeast, including work relief archaeology outside the southeast in Iowa, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Oklahoma (Doershuk and Cordell 2013; Johnson 2013; Means 2013d; Regnier, Livingood and Hammerstedt 2013). The HAIG session in 2011 continued to explore various aspects of New Deal archaeology across the U.S. (Means 2011a). In 2012, David Dye (2015) sponsored a HAIG session on TVA archaeology. For this latter effort, I assessed whether modern scholarship on New Deal archaeology focuses on that conducted for the TVA because: more work relief archaeology was done for the TVA than any comparable region; and/or modern archaeologists who draw on New Deal collections are more active in the southeast. I found evidence to sup-

port both statements (Means 2015). William S. Webb's aggressive push to have archaeological investigations precede the construction of dams under the TVA was a major reason; so much New Deal archaeology took place in the southeastern states (Dye 2013; Schroeder 2013).

In the northeastern states, with the exception of Pennsylvania and New Jersey—both with dedicated state government archaeologists and very active avocational groups—little to no work relief projects were apparently conducted. Outside of Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas, the number of New Deal archaeology projects west of the Mississippi is relatively low or nonexistent. The numbers for western projects are misleading, as significant work was conducted in the western states, such as at Pueblo Grande in Phoenix, Arizona (Downum and Bostwick 1993). Because New Deal Archaeology in the southeastern U.S. is well covered by Lyon (1996), Fagette (1996) and Dye's (2015) forthcoming TVA archaeology book, the remainder of this paper will consider select case studies of work relief archaeology in other regions of the U.S.

Case Studies of Work Relief Projects Outside of the Southeastern U.S.

Northeastern U.S. Case Studies

The decades preceding the crash of 1929 saw growing avocational and professional interest in the archaeological record of New Jersey and Pennsylvania. This led to preliminary efforts in both states to document their respective archaeological heritages—especially those related to the traces of American Indians. Both states were 'shovel ready' when New Deal funding became available—and leading archaeologists in the two states aggressively pursued work relief funding. Despite years of research by Janet Johnson of The State Museum of Pennsylvania and Bernard Means, substantial excavations that happened in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, under WPA sponsorship were overlooked until this past year. A chance mention in an overview of Pittsburgh archaeology (Cowin 1985) led us to an extensive report on these investigations prepared in the mid-1940s, but that saw extremely limited circulation. Bliss's (1943) lengthy report addressed the massive WPA excavations he directed in the early 1940s at the French and Indian War-era Fort Duquesne and Fort Pitt. In a later article, Bliss (1945: 73) outlined the research questions that guided the investigation of these two forts and that could not be answered by his exhaustive research in the historical archives, including: 'What was the original location of the forts and how were they oriented in relation to modern Pittsburgh?'; 'What, if anything, remained of the forts?'; and 'How accurate were the plans of the early engineers?'. Heavy equipment was used to peel away several feet of the modern city of Pittsburgh, and then more laborious hand labor revealed preserved traces of 18th-century fortifications buried deep under the Pittsburgh streets, including one of Fort Pitt's bastions (Bliss 1943; 1945: 73). The remains of Fort Pitt were quite extensive and were encountered in 25 of 28 excavated test units (Bliss 1943: 74). Most of the earlier Fort Duquesne, however, proved to have been largely destroyed (Bliss 1943: 74).

New Jersey's work relief archaeology differed from that conducted in Pennsylvania in a number of important

respects. Although more or less overseen by state archaeologist Donald Cadzow, Pennsylvania's work relief efforts were run on a local level—often by county governments or historical societies—and drew on a wide range of New Deal programs for funding, including the CCC, CWA, FERA, NYA, and WPA (Johnson 2013; Means 1998; 2009; 2013c). New Jersey's work relief archaeology was funded solely by the WPA and had central control via the New Jersey State Museum—and under the direction of Dorothy Cross, one of the most prominent (and rare) female archaeologists in charge of a New Deal archaeology program. This centralized control ensured that all but one New Jersey county saw work relief archaeology, as opposed to Pennsylvania's more uneven coverage. Cross also oversaw two major publications resulting from the New Deal investigations of her state. Pennsylvania's work relief archaeology was largely confined to short articles in the *Pennsylvania Archaeologist*. Lattanzi (2013) explores New Jersey's WPA efforts, including the role of professional and avocational archaeologists in the state prior to and during the Great Depression.

Unlike Pennsylvania to its north, but more like Virginia to its south, Maryland saw limited archaeological investigations during the Great Depression. Two of Maryland's counties saw work relief archaeology: Frederick and Washington. Relief archaeology in Washington County was supported by the CCC and limited to investigations at Fort Frederick. These CCC investigations were conducted prior to reconstruction of the old stone fort at Fort Frederick—and generally followed a pattern seen with CCC investigations at other heritage sites. As with early excavations at Jamestown (Pykles 2011), the CCC investigations at Fort Frederick emphasized the uncovering of structural remains rather than any serious attempt to address research questions.

All work relief archaeology in Frederick County was conducted under the auspices of the WPA. WPA investigations took place at the Catoctin Iron Furnace, part of the National Park Service's Catoctin Mountain Park, in 1936. The goal of the WPA investigations was to locate a 1774 furnace. A casting shed associated with the furnace was uncovered and identified by the WPA excavation team (Orr and Orr 1975: 6–8). The remaining WPA archaeology in Frederick County was directed by E. Ralston Goldsborough, who had as his official sponsor the Maryland School for the Deaf. Goldsborough was an avocational archaeologist who began surface collecting archaeological sites along the Monocacy River in the early years of the 20th-century (Peck 1979: 20–21). With WPA funding, Goldsborough investigated a number of American Indian sites, including a rock shelter and a small village (Peck 1979: 21). The nature of Goldsborough's relationship with the Maryland School for the Deaf remains unclear. Was the School simply a project sponsor, or did some of their charges participate in the WPA excavations?

Mid-Western Case Study

Just over 25 percent of Nebraska's 93 counties saw some form of work relief archaeology. With one exception, all of these projects were carried out with WPA-funded labor forces. The lone exception is the CWA-sponsored excavation of the Behrnes site in Cass County. These excavations,

under the sponsorship of the University of Nebraska, were completed in 1934 by field director G.H. Gilmore, who worked under the direction of Earl H. Bell (Bell and Gilmore 1936; John Ludwickson, personal communication, 2011). Between 1936 and 1941, the University of Nebraska or the Nebraska State Historical Society drew on WPA laborers to excavate sites, with an emphasis on protohistoric or historic-era Pawnee villages (Grange 1969; John Ludwickson, personal communication, 2011; McCoy n.d.; Wedel 1953). Many, but not all, of these sites were located in counties along the Missouri or Platte rivers. Four counties that do not fall into this pattern are Chase, Dawes, Garden, and Webster. Of these four counties, probably the most interesting is the work in Dawes County. A non-archeological CCC work crew at Chadron State Park Site encountered the burial of an American Indian. This led to a WPA-sponsored excavation at a Woodland-era house site (Koch 2000; John Ludwickson, personal communication, 2011).

Western U.S. Case Studies

Helen Sloan Daniels, who lived all but four years of her life in Durango, Colorado, made both minor and major contributions to the archaeology and ethnology of the area around her hometown. Here, I focus on her work from 1936 to 1940 with the Durango Public Library Museum Project, which employed shifting numbers of young men and women provided by the NYA. Writing on September 14, 1940, Daniels (1940) noted that only the typist was consistent on the project from payroll to payroll. The young men and women that worked on the Durango Public Library Museum Project began their NYA work clearing and preparing a room in the library to serve as a museum of regional American Indian culture, both contemporary and that preserved in the archaeological record.

However, Daniels also began to survey archaeological sites in La Plata County, Colorado, which includes Durango, and to excavate and document a few of these as well. Daniels ascribed to traditional field gender roles and only worked with young boys on the field projects. Daniels actively worked with professionals on her project, consulting with them as she could. She and her technical advisor, I. F. Flora, made a particular effort to recover material suitable for the then relatively new technique of dendrochronology (e.g. 'tree-ring dating'). Samples recovered by the NYA workers extended the local tree ring chronology back to 253 A.D. Only those sites actively threatened with development were excavated—and too few of those given the limited amount of time the NYA workers were available to Daniels (**Fig. 2**). They also tried to save material recovered by the many New Deal-funded construction projects that took place in and around Durango: 'Here we see sites destroyed daily by our attempts to make a modern city. We could not stop the gravel pit, the highway crews, or the CCC Camps occupancy of prehistoric sites, and we salvaged what we could with the facilities at hand, compiling a generous record of the house forms, skeletal material and tools of early residents of the San Juan Basin' (Daniels 1940).

Los Angeles, California's venerable Southwest Museum had a connection to New Deal archaeology in Nevada at

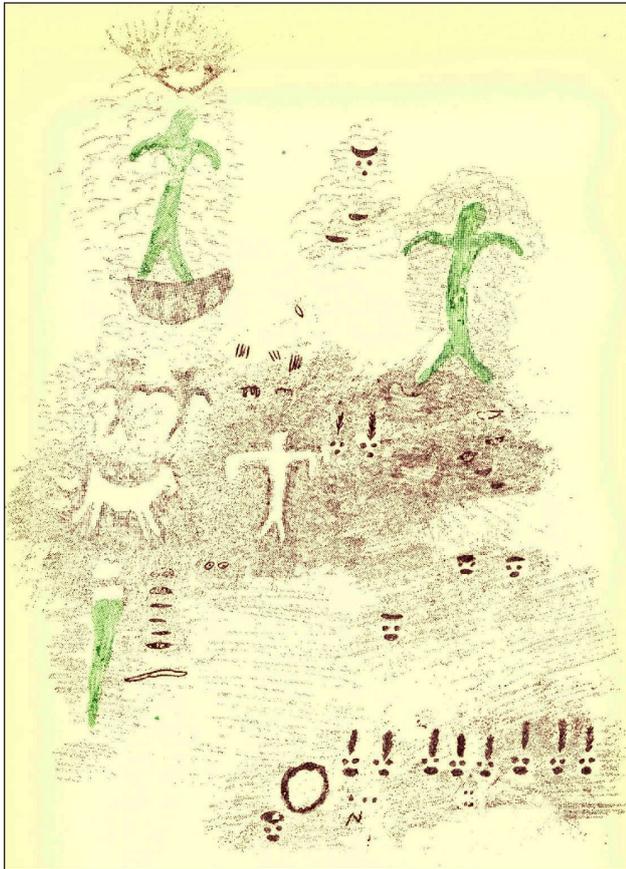


Figure 2: Reproduction of Middle Terrace Pictographs from Falls Creek. Adapted from Daniels (1940).

the so-called 'Lost City' but details on these excavations have been difficult to find (Harrington 1933; 1934a). The museum's publication, the *Masterkey*, covered these New Deal investigations, but this small journal is apparently not publicly indexed anywhere. Even if it were, details of M. R. Harrington's frantic work with CCC crews to excavate Puebloan sites before they were inundated by the waters of Boulder (now Hoover) Dam (**Fig. 3**) would likely not appear in many indexes, as they were usually provided in the prosaically named 'Report of the Curator' (Harrington 1934b; 1935a, b; 1937c, d, e). Technically speaking, Harrington was not an employee of the Southwest Museum while leading the CCC excavations, but rather was placed on leave from the museum. This arrangement apparently satisfied the Southwest Museum's stated goal of not receiving any direct government support.

The Southwest Museum did directly benefit from New Deal programs, however. The Museum obtained collections from the 'Lost City' excavations and also received material from the Smithsonian's CWA excavations at the Buena Vista Lake site in Kern County, California (Masterkey 1940). And, visitors to the Southwest Museum benefited from the Federal Arts Project, a New Deal program administered by the National Park Service (Harrington 1936a,b; 1937a, d, e). In exchange for providing space to host the Federal Arts Project, the Southwest Museum was given a copy of every diorama, painting, or other exhibit material that was being produced for interpretive centers in the region.

Online access to archived journals is certainly critical to my efforts to examine all New Deal archaeology survey and excavation efforts on a national scale. A search through *American Antiquity* for the 1930s and 1940s turned up numerous references to federal work relief archaeology, including one project that involved NYA labor (**Fig. 4**) to excavate sites in the Columbia River Basin to be flooded by the construction of the Grand Coulee Dam in Washington State (*American Antiquity* 1940: 177). The original report on the Grand Coulee Dam project is a rather comprehensive and honest appraisal of the efforts of academic archaeologists to work with the NYA. This work relief project saw many challenges in excavating sites in advance of the rising flood waters and working with young men during a winter 'hampered by severe weather and frozen ground' (Collier, Hudson and Ford 1942: 11). The project ran from September 1939 to 1940 (Collier, Hudson and Ford 1942: 3) and had four different directors during this time. Collier, Hudson and Ford (1942: 11) acknowledged that: 'It is obvious from the above brief history of the project that it did not operate under the most favorable conditions. Certainly the greatest difficulty, as revealed in the preparation of the results for publication, arose from the lack of continuity in leadership. Many of the sites worked



Figure 3: CCC crew works on a stratified site near Boulder (now Hoover) Dam. Adapted from Harrington (1937b: 87).

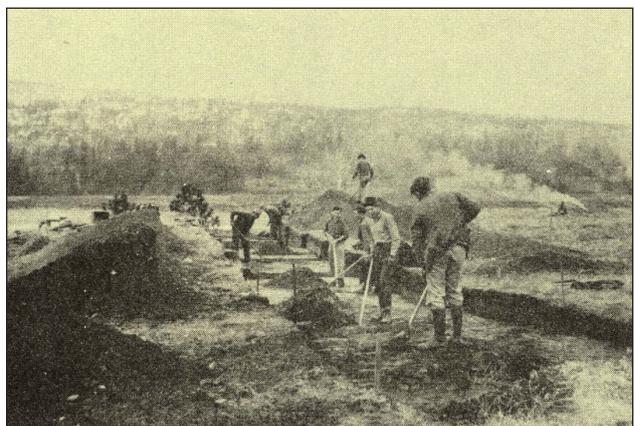


Figure 4: NYA crew excavates a trench in Site 34, near the Columbia River. Adapted from Collier, Hudson and Ford (1942: Plate 18b).

during the first months of field work and flooded soon thereafter have never been seen by the senior authors'. The project archaeologists also had to deal with maintaining permanent camps for the NYA workers who labored on the excavations, because the areas where the archaeology was being conducted were so remote. In one case, the NYA camp was moved simply because of logistical challenges with supplying their workers with basic necessities (Collier, Hudson and Ford 1942: 11–12)—and this likely influenced which sites were excavated in the limited time available. Collier, Hudson and Ford (1942) offered insight not just into the archaeology of the Upper Columbia region of Washington State, but also in the conduct of work relief archaeology.

Conclusions

These case studies are a sampling of vignettes highlighting geographic variation in New Deal archaeology. Some of these projects have been largely forgotten, but in many cases provided the first, basic understanding of the deep—and not so deep—past in many parts of the U.S. These vignettes also show that, while the majority of work relief archaeology took place in the southeastern U.S., there were interesting and significant projects elsewhere. If nothing else, a nationwide professional community grew out of the shared experience of work relief archaeology. Navigating the New Deal bureaucracy was not for the faint of heart. Much of the regional variation in where work relief bureaucracy took place depended on strong personalities passionate about the past, such as Donald Cadzow, Dorothy Cross, Helen Sloan Daniels, and William S. Webb, among many others. New Deal funds were ideally suited to meet local interest in the past because of the manner in which monies were distributed. For whatever reason New Deal archaeology was conducted, substantive research and large collections were generated that radically revised and continue to shape our understanding of America's past.

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