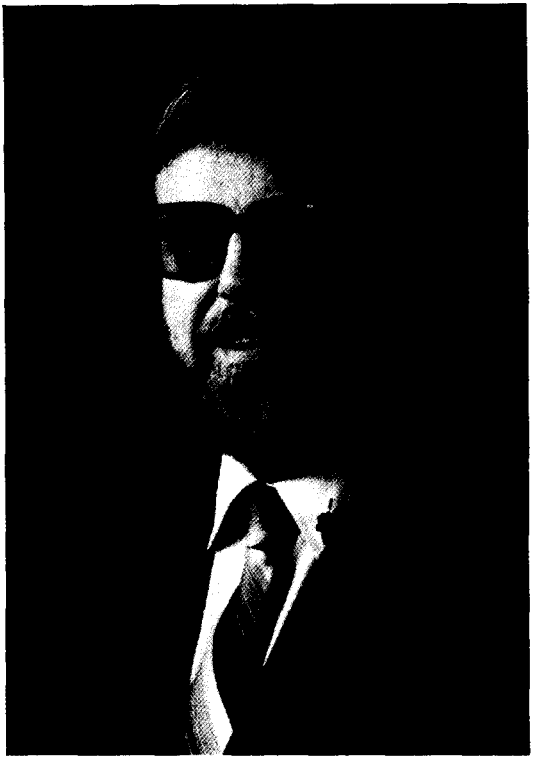
J.C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology

STANLEY A. SOUTH 1987



At this time, when Stanley South is receiving the most prestigious award our profession has to offer, I think it is appropriate to lay out, in his honor, another pattern in the fabric of historical archaeology. Naturally, it will be called the "Stanley South Pattern."

In creating this pattern I have deviated from a few of the axiomatic rules of pattern making. For example, I have not counted, that is quantified, anything. I have not even looked for Stanley's age; it is enough to say that he was born on Ground Hog Day. I have not created any "Groups" or "Classes," nor have I computer frequencies. No percentages were calculated and, therefore, I have no tables of percentage relationships that "reveal the 'Stanley South Pattern.' " What is even more unorthodox about this pattern is that I have tried not to let the facts interfere with the truth.

In putting this review together, it seemed that some of the most valuable sources might be Stan's colleagues who were starting out in the new field of historical archaeology at about the same time he was. I imagined calling Jim Deetz and Ivor Noel-Hume to ask for their comments on the highlights of Stan's career.

I first call Deetz. "Hello, Jim. This is Leland Ferguson." We exchange small talk, and then I tell him about Stanley's receiving the award and ask what he thinks are the highlights of Stan's career.

Without hesitation, Jim replies,"Oh, that's easy. You know, Leland, Stan's mean ceramic date formula has been used all over the world, wherever there were English Colonies. And his pattern construction has been very popular, and I think those things are major contributions. But I really think that the apex of Stanley's career, so far, was a few years back at that SHA meeting in Nashville when he read his poetry! Stan's understanding of deep structure as represented by that poetry made me feel that one day he really would get at the minds of the people he studies.

"Actually," he says, "Stan's poetry is not all that far from Mark Leone's archaeology!"

Stanley's poetry? Deetz thought that Stanley's poetry would yet lead him to his major contribution and the zenith of his career? He should see his painting. I was sure that Noel-Hume would have something more orthodox to say.

The telephone rings, and I can tell it is Noel-Hume who answers. "Hello, Noel?" (I'm very informal in my imagination), "this is Leland Ferguson."

"Who—?"

"Leland Ferguson, from the University of South Carolina."

There is an unsettling pause, then,"Oh, the young fellow with the Colono-Indian pottery."

"Yes," I reply, "that's me." Again, we pass a few pleasantries. We talk about Colono-Indian Ware and Colono Ware. I tell him about the award and say, "I wondered if you would tell me a few of the things that you think are the major contributions of Stanley's career."

Silence at the other end of the phone. Then Noel-Hume replied, "His major contributions?"

"Yes," I say. "You know, his best work."

Noel-Hume pauses some more, and then repeats, "His best work?"

"Yes," I say.

"Well, I've been completely through Stan's book. Now what was the title?"

Method and Theory in Historical Archaeology?" I offer.

"Yes," he says, "that's the one. *Theoretical Archaeology*. A few years ago, I went completely through that book, and . . . ugh, I liked the photographs, I found the illustrations to be . . . humorous, the tables were nicely done, and, knowing Stanley, I expect that all of those percentages were calculated correctly."

I listen. "Is there anything else?"

"Oh," he answers, "I think that as a graduate student he did some fine work in prehistory. And," he continues, "we did learn some valuable things about colonial North Carolina from the excavations he conducted at Brunswick Town and Bethabara. I remember," (he's reminiscing now), "Stan used to come up to Colonial Williamsburg with boxes full of sherds. He wanted to know about the types and dates of all kinds of ceramics, and I did my best to help him. I think that was when he was working on that formula. You know, the one that gives you a date you already know. That is you should know it if you know your ceramics and the archaeological context well enough." We end our conversation talking about the Savannah meeting.

Well, I thought, those were pretty interesting conversations, but there won't be enough to the Stanley South Pattern if I rely on only the stuff I got from those two fellows. Poetry? Illustrations? Amusing? I guess Noel-Hume was referring to the pig chart and the chicken chart.

I began to go over Stanley's life and career myself, trying to keep the faith that I would recognize a pattern. I asked myself, "Would it help to try being hypothetico-deductive?" No, I decided it would be more productive, not to mention fun, to be "particularistico-inductive." (By the way, "particularistico-inductive" is a new hyphenated word which I am donating, in Stan's honor, to methodoligical and theoretical archaeology). I decided to think about specific events, the specific elements of the pattern; I guess it could be called a "bill of historical particulars" of Stan's career. I had his vita, and there were many, many stories. Stories hang about Stanley like moss on a live-oak tree. I thought, perhaps, those stories together with the vita . . . well, that they would reveal a pattern.

Stanley South was born in the mountains of North Carolina. His father was a Democratic politician, the clerk of court in Watauga County, and his mother ran a guest house for summer tourists. From the time he was four years old and refused to take off his cowboy boots to go to bed, Mrs South knew this child was going to have a "mind of his own" (her euphemism for "bull headed").

It was not long after he started wearing cowboy boots that Stanley learned how to review and put red felt-tipped pen marks all over archaeological papers, and he learned it from a chicken! Stanley grew up on a mountainside overlooking the town of Boone. His grandmother lived a little farther up the mountain, and he often went to visit her in her little home.

Now, like most people in the mountains, Stan's grandmother had a fence around her house, and inside this fence was a big, and very bad, Dominecker Rooster. This rooster liked tow-headed, five-year-old boys—they "made his day." Trip after trip as he raced through a gauntlet of beak, and feathers, and talons, Stanley would end up crying on the porch.

Stanley's grandmother told him to call her when he was at the gate; but, although only five, Stanley was embarassed to have his grandmother have to escort him by a chicken. So one day Stanley decided to end it. He and this bird were going to have it out. On his way up the path to grandma's he picked up a big, heavy rock—a "Dominecker Rock." Breathing deeply, he boldly opened the gate and walked right through, just like he was going into the church yard. The dominecker saw the little boy and made his rush. Stanley waited, waited, and when the rooster was almost to him he let him have it with the rock, right on the head. The rooster fell into a limp pile of speckled feathers.

Stanley's grandmother had heard the commotion and was now on the porch. "Stanley Austin! My rooster! You've killed my rooster! You've killed my rooster!" Stanley was frightened, and tears were streaming down his little face. He didn't really mean to kill the rooster. But, there he was, limp in the dust.

Then, just as Stan was beginning to think that his grandmother was going to whip him for the very first time, the rooster moved. He slowly and drowsily got up, shook his feathers and began walking drunkenly around the yard. He survived! Stanley escaped the whipping, and from that point on, Stanley and the Dominecker had a good relationship of mutual respect.

Over the years, many of us have received Stanley's criticism of our archaeological reports. Papers have been returned from Stanley with red pen marks calling for references all over the pages and crimson epistles spilling down the margins. Receiving these blood-red reviews we have felt like we were hit over the head with a "Dominecker Rock." Nevertheless, we've recovered, and we have learned from Stanley's criticism. Moreover, we have developed a great respect for this man who stands firmly, and with a big rock, behind his convictions—another part of the Stanley South Pattern.

When he was eleven, Stanley began working toward a career goal that carried through to his college years. However, it wasn't historical archaeology, it wasn't even collecting arrowheads. At eleven years of age, six-foot-tall Stanley South began singing on the radio under the stage name "Wee Willie." Every Saturday, Stanley was down at the studio of Boone's WAUG, and every Saturday he entertained the Carolina mountains with songs like "Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair" and "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes."

Following "Wee Willie" was another program by one of Stan's chums known as "The Blind Wonder." After Stanley had thirty minutes of bringing the best in popular music to the mountains, his blind friend would come on and sing simple mountain songs while he accompanied himself with three chords on a guitar. Stanley felt sorry for his friend because he had to sing those old fashioned songs. Unlike Stanley he couldn't see to read music, and Stanley knew that poor Doc Watson didn't have much of a future in the music business. But Stanley—now Stanley could read music and he was on his way!

By the time he was seventeen years old, Stanley had completed one year of college and was enlisted in the United States Navy. It was World War II and, through some type of sophisticated intelligence

gathering system, the Japanese must have learned that Stan was on his way: For, just after he completed boot camp and was ready to go overseas, they surrendered. (Maybe they had heard about the chicken.)

Returning as one of the youngest veterans of the War, Stanley resumed his career in music by studying music education at Appalachian State Teachers College in his home town. His education continued smoothly until his junior year and a course in musicology. This was a course in which the students covered the basics, that is the "nomothetic laws" of music: notes, scales, keys, transposition. Now Stanley was a solor singer. He sang in his own key and "reading music" to him was being able to tell if the notes went up or down, or, fast or slow. In this course the professor wanted him to understand how all these things fit together, and what was more he had to listen to music and write the score. Stanley tried. He tried, but he couldn't do it. He decided to switch majors. His switch led him to elementary education and then to work as a professional photographer, and finally to study archaeology in graduate school.

In looking over the whole sequence of events, I have come to another conclusion about the Stanley South Pattern. I think we can say that we now have a book entitled *Method and Theory in Historical Archaeology* because Stanley could not understand method and theory in music!

Stanley entered archaeology as a graduate student at the University of North Carolina. At that time, archaeology meant prehistoric archaeology, and Stanley's mentor Joffre Coe sent him to the Roanoke Rapids Basin on the border between North Carolina and Virginia to cut his archaeological teeth. Stan's late wife Jewel used to joke that this project almost ended their marriage.

Now before your imaginations run away with you on how the marriage almost ended, let me tell you about the project. The Roanoke basin was located in a very remote region of the coastal plain, and Stanley had limited gear and only small tents to establish a camp. It was really roughing it, and Jewel was holding her own. But then another graduate student, Lewis Binford, came up to help with the project. The three of them, Stanley, Jewel, and "Big Lew" began working together.

Okay, if you haven't guessed Jewel's problem already, imagine, just imagine the energy, the enthusiasm, the ebullience of Stanley South and Lewis Binford as second year graduate students! Jewel said that these two masters of archaeological communication talked nothing but archaeology, archaeology, archaeology. This pit, that level, Guilford Points, Halifax Points, cultural evolution, Leslie White, Louis Henry Morgan! They talked archaeology from the time they woke up in the morning, through the work day, over supper and into the night and on into the night. And Jewel was stuck with these two guys! She couldn't get away! It is testimony to her mettle and perserverance that she survived that ordeal of enthusiasm.

Out of that energy, enthusiasm and ebullience, Stanley produced his master's thesis, *A Study of the Prehistory of the Roanoke Rapids Basin: 1959*. It included the archaeology of the Gaston site, and it was a major contribution to the archaeology of the Atlantic coast. This thesis looks like about three or four normal theses stacked on top of one another; and using Stanley's thesis, as well as the results of other excavations, Joffre Coe was able to put together what is perhaps the most widely used publication on prehistoric archaeology of the Middle Atlantic States: *Formative Cultures of the Carolina Piedmont.* With his thesis, Stan demonstrated the exuberance for archaeology that would characterize the rest of his career.

Following graduate school Stan went to work as archaeologist for the North Carolina Department of Archives and History. His first assignment was as site manager and archaeologist at Town Creek Indian Mound where, in addition to excavating and running the park, he reconstructed a Mississippian-style temple atop the mound. It was in 1958 that Stan became an historical archaeologist, when he was transferred by Archives and History to excavate and manage the eighteenth century site of Brunswick Town and Civil War Fort Fisher. Local archaeological legend has it that upon occasion of this momentus transfer Joffre Coe said, in his droll manner, "Well, it looks like Stanley's left archaeology to dig around old house foundations."

Perhaps when he made the switch, Stanley didn't realize the changes that were in store. While he was at Town Creek, he regularly received time off to attend the Southeastern Archaeological Conference. In the fall after his move to the historical sites, Stan once again prepared to attend the Conference. His supervisor saw his preparations and said, "No!" Stanley asked why, and he was told that since he was *now* doing *historical archaeology* and since SEAC was a conference on *prehistoric archaeology* that he couldn't have time off to attend.

Of course, there was no conference on historic site archaeology to attend. So Stanley stayed home. But not the next year. Before the next SEAC meeting, Stanley quietly (that is as quietly as Stanley can be) made arrangements for a meeting of historical archaeologists to be held the day before the SEAC, and he went in and told his boss that this year they were having an historical archaeological conference! Might he have time off to go? He did, and in 1960 the *Conference on Historic Site Archaeology* was founded.

In total impact on the field, founding this conference was perhaps the most important contribution of Stanley's career. Through the Conference, historical archaeologists had a forum and a means for publication. Stanley organized every meeting, he kept track of all the finances and every year he collected, edited and published the proceedings, fifteen volumes in all. The Conference was the first historical archaeological organization in the country. It laid much of the groundwork for the Society for Historical Archaeology.

The more recent aspects of the Stanley South Pattern are much more widely known than those of earlier days. For many years now, Stan has been a Senior Archaeologist and Research Professor of Anthropology at the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology. From that position he has worked diligently to do his part in forging the new field of historical archaeology. Among his many excavations have been work at Charles Towne Landing, the Revolutionary War forts of Ninety-Six and Fort Moultrie, and the sixteenth century Spanish ciudad of Santa Elena. In addition to many, many papers and reports, Stanley has written one book (now in its third printing), edited another and served as Editor for books in the Academic Press series, Studies in Historical Archaeology. He was a contributor to the Airlie House Conference that established goals and guidelines for public service archaeology, and he has served the profession in a variety of other ways.

While doing all of this archaeological work, there is another part of Stanley's career that should be included in the pattern. In recent years, Stan has become a popular teacher in the graduate program at the University of South Carolina. However, throughout the years I have known him, Stan has always been a teacher. He couldn't help it. Stanley has always been willing to talk, read or write archaeology at any time, at any place, with anyone who was interested. With thousands of people, he has discussed projects, read reports and made his comments—comments that have, above all, called for scientific rigor in conducting archaeology. Moreover, as younger archaeologists have embarked upon their careers, Stanley has been there with support and encouragement as well as constructive criticism. It seems the appropriate time for me to say "Thanks, prof' " from all of us.

In conclusion: The Stanley South Pattern is energetic, industrious, productive, rigorous and critical. It is collegial, supportive, poetic, folksy, amusing and occasionally stubborn. Stnaley has enthusiastically given himself to our field. In the colorful and complicated fabric of historical archaeology, the Stanley South Pattern stands out as a significant part of the warp around which the weft of everyday archaeology has been woven. Moreover, I want to say that I know Stanley will have a good comeback to any critics who come up and say, "You know, Stan, Leland was right in the title of that review, *you really have warped historical archaeology.*"

Leland Ferguson