

J. C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology

CARLYLE SHREEVE SMITH 1989



Carlyle Shreeve Smith was born on March 8, 1915, in Great Neck, New York. His family was long resident in the area, and a tidewater grist mill built by an ancestor in 1710 still stands as a National Register site. In his youth Carlyle developed a deep interest in the material objects of the past, a fascination fueled by contact with Francis Bannerman Sons, a company which still deals in military surplus from all time periods and places. Carl began studying, collecting, and restoring firearms when he was 13. That hobby developed into professional expertise in firearms identification, a hallmark of his contributions to historical archaeology.

Carlyle had decided on a career in archaeology by the time he entered high school and took materials he excavated from local sites on Long Island to Nels Nelson at the American Museum. These specimens ultimately appeared in his Ph.D. dissertation. He was an avid student of history, literature, French, German, and Latin, later adding Norwegian to his language skills.

Carlyle did his undergraduate work at Columbia College of Columbia University where he took

ethnology courses from Gene Weltfish, Alexander Lesser, and Ralph Linton. He was introduced to archaeology at historic sites by William Calver and Ralph Solecki. William Duncan Strong took him on the Columbia University Expedition to North Dakota in 1938, the year of his graduation, and he was "hooked" on Plains Archaeology.

Carl began graduate work in 1938/39 at Columbia. He increased his archaeological field experience working with A.T. Hill in a WPA archaeological field unit in Nebraska. He continued field work in 1940/41 in New York and served under George Quimby in Louisiana where he directed the excavation of the Bayou Goula site.

During World War II Smith worked for a time in the pre-Pearl Harbor aircraft industry and married Judith Pogany. He was offered a project to find and excavate Fort Pitt but World War II and Selective Service intervened, and he went instead to serve in the Army Air Force. After the war he completed his dissertation and received his Ph.D. from Columbia in 1949.

Carlyle's dissertation research, "The Archaeology of Coastal New York," has been recognized by the naming of "The Carlyle S. Smith Archaeological Laboratories" at the Nassau County Museum of Natural History, Garvies Point, Glen Cove, Long Island, New York.

Carl joined the faculty at the University of Kansas in Lawrence in 1947 as Curator of the Division of Anthropology of the Museum of Natural History, a post he held until 1968. He was also Professor of Anthropology until his retirement in 1980 when he became both Professor and Curator Emeritus. Carlyle made significant improvements in both museum and academic aspects of Anthropology at KU.

At the University of Kansas Carlyle Smith embarked on an extended period of work in Plains archaeology, and excavated the Kansas Monument site, a significant Pawnee village of the early 19th century. The specimens included vast amounts of trade goods and firearms and drew upon all of Carlyle's expertise in the identification of artifacts of Euro-American origin.

During the 1950s Smith was involved in salvaging archaeological data from sites to be inundated in the series of dams which obliterated the Missouri River from Nebraska to Montana. It was an exciting time when each site excavated produced a new culture or period. Carl spent three seasons at the Talking Crow site near Fort Thompson, South Dakota, where he defined several key ceramic types. His seriations, based on this significant stratified site, were very important to the culture history of the area. The recreational reconstruction of a scale model of an excavated house became an experiment widely publicized in "The Archaeologist at Work." Carl's ethnological skills meant good local relationships, and the Dakota at Fort Thompson ceremonially named him *Kangi-ia-wakan*, Holy Crow Voice or Talking Crow.

Carlyle Smith excavated many important prehistoric and protohistoric sites in South Dakota: Spain Site, Two Teeth, and Stricker are prominent examples. It is notable that Bert Salwen, honored with the Harrington Medal this same year, was Carlyle's field assistant at the Stricker site. Carlyle's inclusion of women as equal members of his field crews was exceptional in that period. He was honored for his contributions to Plains Archaeology with the award of Doctor of Humane Letters, *Honoris causa*, by the University of South Dakota in 1979.

A shift in pattern began in 1955 when Carlyle joined Thor Heyerdahl's expedition to Easter Island. Carl dated artifacts, did research on the Poike Ditch, studied the *ahu* ceremonial platforms, and made a mold of one of the large statues. Always interested in historic sites, he visited Pitcairn Island where the mutinous crew of the *Bounty* settled. Carl and Judy returned to the Pacific in 1963 where he carried out a program of archaeological research at Pekia, a ceremonial site on Hiva Oa in the Marquesas.

In later years Carlyle's health limited his ability to continue rigorous field work but not his teaching and writing. Then he began a new career lecturing on archaeological subjects and serving as a guide on cruise ships where he brings to the general public a new awareness of the past. He has made at least 19 such voyages and returned to Easter Island many times.

Smith excavated several historic sites in the Plains. In addition to Kansas Monument, there were historic components at most sites in South Dakota. He excavated the Deerfly site, a 19th-century cabin near the prehistoric Spain Site, which many others would have abandoned once its age had been determined. In Lawrence, Kansas, his historical archaeology class excavated evidence of Quantrill's 1863 raid. Nearly a third of Carlyle Smith's publications are on historical archaeology topics especially dealing with firearms identification.

Carlyle's interest in firearms led him to historical research and translation of documents on gunflint manufacture which he coupled with field work at gunflint production sites in France and Italy. Carlyle also developed and offered courses in historical archaeology and in the evolution and history of firearms. His students in the classroom, as well as those in the field, were always given hands-on experience with working examples of flintlocks and other historical firearms. He is probably the only archaeologist capable of firing a bracket around a log in the Missouri River with his own cannon!

In the 1950s and '60s, before there was a Society for Historical Archaeology, Carlyle Smith was one of the very few archaeologists who could identify the firearms, gunparts, cartridges, and bullets found in historic sites like Kansas Monument or Like-a-Fishhook Village. He generously shared his knowledge with his colleagues. He was sought out time after time to identify these fragments. Sometimes these efforts resulted in publications with a by-line but more often than not are marked only by a brief acknowledgment of his contribution. The Society for Historical Archaeology particularly honors Carlyle Smith for these efforts which contributed to the early development of historical archaeology which he always has treated as a vital part of the discipline.

ROGER T. GRANGE, JR.