
The annual SAA meetings are common venues for archaeologists to hold symposia to recognize the achievements of their distinguished mentors and colleagues. This was the goal of the 2012 SAA session organized to honor the work of Vance Haynes and George Frison. Following two fascinating biographies, the editors present twelve chapters grouped among the three “research domains in which Frison and Haynes have made some of their most lasting contributions”: Peopling of North America and Paleoindians, Geo-archaeology, and Bison Bone Bed Studies. The range and quality of the contributions to this volume really represent an effort to parallel the remarkable contributions to so many aspects of North American geology and archaeology made by Haynes and Frison. The bibliographies of these two men reveal both the quantity and quality of their extensive fieldwork and analyses beginning with the first publications by Haynes in 1955 and Frison in 1962 and continuing until today. Many of the chapters are original reports of new research; some are updated syntheses of work previously published.

The section on Peopling of North America and Paleoindians begins with Stuart Fiedel’s critical review of the evidence for pre-Clovis occupations in North America. Once again he provides quite a detailed summary, site by site, that supports his continuing skepticism for many of the claims. Andrea Freeman provides an excellent summary of the environmental and archaeological record of the ice-free corridor that separated the Laurentide and Cordilleran ice sheets, which has for many years been of intense interest as a possible pathway for movements and adaptations by Paleoindians. The record of Paleoindians in Mexico is the subject of the chapter by Sanchez and Carpenter, who review the density and distribution of Clovis and younger Paleoinindan artifacts, as well as an overview of the archaeological evidence for human associations with mammoths in the Basin of Mexico. Although dated sites are rare, the authors conclude that there is no evidence for any occupation of Mexico prior to 13,000 years ago. Following a sincere tribute to the many contributions to Paleoindian lithic analysis by Frison, Smallwood and Jennings present a new summary of their analysis of use wear on Clovis bifaces from the Gault site in Texas. Their microwear studies, supported by considerable experimental work, is an excellent contribution. The last paper in this section of the book is on the Younger Dryas archaeology at the Paisley caves in the northern Great Basin. With none of the controversy surrounding the claimed pre-Clovis materials below this horizon, this chapter presents a fascinating summary of the phenomenally diverse and well-preserved array of organic materials recovered from this thin zone within the caves. Most important are the vivid conclusions that they draw concerning the diet and behavior of the inhabitants.
The geoarchaeology section of the book begins with a meticulous report of soils stratigraphy and formation analyses conducted by Vance Holliday at the Lindenmeier Folsom site in Colorado. Building on previous work by Haynes (and collaborating with him), Holliday describes a complex sequence of depositional, erosional, and pedogenic processes and their implications for the chronology and contexts of Folsom occupations. The first sound dates for Folsom occupations came from Lindenmeier, and Holliday’s work highlights the great potential for further investigations. Vance Haynes is a co-author of the second geoarchaeology paper, which provides a detailed summary of their reinvestigation of the Union Pacific Mammoth site in Wyoming. Although the artifacts recovered from the site will still leave some skeptics concerning their Clovis affiliations, the case for human association with the mammoth is certainly strong. Moreover, the four radiocarbon ages on tusk collagen, which average 11,560±60 years BP, should no longer be dismissed out of hand since they are virtually identical to ages for Clovis occupations at the Aubrey site in Texas and the Fin del Mundo site in Mexico. The last contribution to this section is an excellent summary of the geology and formation processes of late Holocene rockshelter sites in the Big Horn Basin of Wyoming by Judson Finley. This is an excellent example of rockshelter studies, which are not that common in North America, especially those that can be correlated with nearby alluvial records.

The last section, focusing on bison bone bed studies, is a fitting tribute to the work of George Frison, who in all likelihood has excavated and studied more bison bones than any other person in North American archaeology. The section begins with a chapter on Folsom bison hunting in the Southern Plains by Bement and Carter, who have collaborated on the excavation of well-preserved Folsom bison kills in paleogullies of western Oklahoma, including the Cooper, Jake Bluff, and Badger Hole sites. In addition to formation studies and bison butchering analyses, their work has also made substantial contributions to Late Quaternary paleoenvironmental reconstructions. Eileen Johnson and Patrick Lewis author the next chapter, which is an excellent synthesis of bison evolution in the Southern Plains during the Late Quaternary. Both their methodology and results, especially concerning the tempo and environmental forcing of bison size reduction, will be of great interest to zooarchaeologists. Brink’s following chapter is a very good contribution on bison drives and driving based on stone line evidence from the Ross site in Alberta. The last paper, by Krotova, Snizhko, and Logvynenko, describes patterns of bison processing at the Epigravettian (Late Upper Paleolithic) Amvrosievka site in Ukraine. This is an appropriate paper, given George Frison’s travels to both Europe and Africa to document patterns of large game hunting and butchering.

Since the goal of these papers was to honor the contributions of Haynes and Frison, I end on a personal note and add my own gratitude and admiration for these men. Like the contributors to this volume, knowing and learning from Vance and George for many years has been a valuable pleasure.

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