

J.C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology

EDWARD B. JELKS 1988



Edward B. Jelks was honored at the 1988 annual Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA) meetings in Reno, Nevada, as the sixth recipient to receive the Society's J.C. Harrington medal in recognition of his contributions to the field of historical archaeology.

Edward Jelks was born in Macon, Georgia, in 1922, lived in Hollywood, Florida, from 1923 to 1929, then he moved with his family to Texas. His curiosity about the past developed in central Texas, where as a youth he occasionally found artifacts while hunting and fishing.

Jelks began his university training as a pre-med student at the University of Texas, Austin, in 1939, but his undergraduate studies were interrupted when he enlisted in the Navy at the outbreak of World War II. As a Hospital Corpsman, he supervised the operating room staff of Acorn Red One, a field hospital on Guadalcanal that handled Navy and Marine casualties during the fall and winter of 1942–1943. After serving four years in the Navy, he returned to Austin and married Juliet Christian. For over 40 years Judy

has accompanied Ed on many field projects and has been an indispensable partner in every facet of his archaeological research.

Ed began his formal training in anthropology as his minor field of study when he resumed his undergraduate training in Austin in 1945. He was particularly stimulated by G. C. Engerrand, an archaeologist experienced in European and Mexican prehistory. After completing a B.A. in English in 1948, Ed's interest in archaeology prompted him to begin graduate work in anthropology at the University of Texas. He studied mainly under J. Charles Kelly, Thomas N. Campbell, and Gilbert McAllister.

In 1950 after completing his M.A. course work, Jelks accepted a position as Robert L. Stephenson's assistant at the Austin office of the Smithsonian's River Basin Survey (RBS) project. During his first professional field season he participated in the excavation of the Stansbury site, an historic Indian village located on the Brazos River in central Texas. Jelks conducted documentary research on Stansbury and identified it as the 18th-century Quiscat Village of the Tawakoni instead of the 19th-century village of the Towash as it had been previously identified.

This experience stimulated Ed to develop a rigorous approach for identifying documented sites of uncertain location, which combined archaeological and documentary data. His approach involved the a priori construction of a detailed conceptual model from documentary and archaeological data that predicted which artifacts and other archaeological remains should be found at a particular site and the techniques for delineating the geographical areas where the site should be found. Using this method Jelks, his students, and collaborators have identified the archaeological remains of a number of historically documented sites, including Indian villages and Spanish missions in Texas, the site of the first Ft. de Chartres in Illinois, and Redoubt No. 10 at Yorktown, Virginia. In addition, he has traced routes of several expeditions including those of Spanish explorers in Texas and of Mormons in Illinois in 1834.

In 1951 Jelks became the Director of the RBS office in Austin. During the next two years, he and his staff surveyed several planned reservoirs and excavated numerous sites. Jelks was accompanied by Alex Krieger on many of these projects, and he profited greatly from Krieger's insight about archaeology and the past, as well as from discussions about field and analytical problems with other prominent archaeologists like James Ford. It was also at this time that Ed worked in the field with E. H. Sellards and Glen Evans at a number of Paleo-Indian sites, including Blackwater Draw, Lubbock Lake, and Friesenhahn Cave.

Concern with the organization of the immense amount of material recovered during these projects and others fostered the development of the Texas Handbook of Archeology compiled by Dee Ann Suhm, Ed's part-time office assistant, Alex Krieger, and Ed. First published in 1954 and revised in 1962, this monograph is one of the most comprehensive typologies of prehistoric and historic Native American artifacts and continues to be a standard reference.

In 1953, Ed was transferred to the National Park Service (NPS) when they assumed administrative responsibility for the RBS. Funding shortfalls led to the closing of the Austin office from 1954 through 1956 and Ed was transferred by the NPS to Virginia. In Virginia he served as John Cotter's assistant during exploratory excavations at Jamestown, where he was assigned to excavate a number of major features. While in Virginia, he conducted exploratory excavations at Yorktown Battlefield, locating and identifying components of the U.S. and French defensive earthworks of the Battle of Yorktown. Of particular note was his discovery of Redoubt No. 10, a key position whose capture turned the tide of battle in favor of the Americans. Because of his work at Jamestown and Yorktown, Jelks in 1982 was presented the Historic Preservation Award by the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities.

Ed returned to Austin in 1956 to reopen the River Basin Survey office. However, in 1958, the NPS

permanently closed the office, opting instead to contract for rescue archaeological services. Coincidentally, at about the same time the University of Texas established a Ph.D. program in anthropology. Ed resigned from the National Park Service and entered the program but continued to work full-time on contract archaeology projects as organizer and director of the Texas Archeological Salvage Project (now the Texas Archeological Survey). During the 15 years (1950 through 1953 and 1956 through 1969) in which Ed directed salvage archaeology in Texas and Louisiana, a prodigious amount of archaeology was accomplished. Surveys were conducted at over 40 planned reservoirs, and more than 100 sites were excavated, 30 of which he personally supervised. The sites spanned a broad spectrum of aboriginal cultures: Paleo-Indian, Archaic, post-Archaic, and Historic Indian sites. In addition, several 18th- and 19th-century Spanish Colonial sites and a number of early to mid-19th century western pioneer sites were excavated. In all, over 150 rescue archaeology reports were written under Ed's direction; he authored or coauthored dozens of them, and edited all of them. Several dozen of these reports have been published. In recognition of part of this work, in 1984 Jelks was given the Clarence H. Webb Award for Contributions to Caddoan Archeology.

Jelks was awarded a Ph.D. in 1965, the first Ph.D. in anthropology in the University of Texas program. That same year, after 15 years of full-time field research, he began a teaching career at Southern Methodist University (SMU). His seminar in historical archaeology, first taught in 1966, was one of the earliest at any university. Kathleen Gilmore, a former SHA president, and Ned Woodall, the current president of the Society of Professional Archaeologists (SOPA), were both in that 1966 seminar.

In 1967, Jelks and Arnold Pilling, of Wayne State University, organized a conference on historical archaeology and invited 15 outstanding historical archaeologists to meet concurrently with the conference to consider the possibility of starting an international historical archaeology society. Pilling chaired the conference which met at SMU, while Jelks chaired the committee of 15. The committee's recommendation to form the Society for Historical Archaeology was acted upon by those attending the general conference. Ed served as the second president of the society in 1968.

Full-time teaching responsibilities did not curtail Ed's field work. Between 1965 and 1969, he conducted excavations and field studies at many historic sites in Texas including a number of historic Indian sites (especially of the Wichita tribes), Ft. Lancaster, a mid-19th century U.S. Army post on the Pecos River, at several 18th-century Spanish Colonial sites, at Ft. Leaton, a 19th-century frontier site in western Texas, and at Washington-on-the-Brazos, the center of Stephen F. Austin's colony and site of Texas' Declaration of Independence from Mexico. During the summers of 1965 and 1966, the Canadian government funded his excavations at Signal Hill National Historical Park, a British military post of the 1790-1860 period at St. John's, Newfoundland.

Jelks left SMU in 1968 and spent seven months at the Smithsonian Institution as a Research Fellow working on a typology of English, French, and Spanish colonial ceramics. That year he became Professor of Anthropology at Illinois State University (ISU), a position he held until he retired in 1984. At ISU he served as Acting Chairman of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology (1974-1975) and as Coordinator for Anthropology (1968-1974). During Jelks' tenure, ISU's Anthropology program expanded dramatically. His teaching skills and additions to the curriculum attracted many students. Particularly popular were his seminar in historical archaeology and the summer field school expeditions organized by him and Judy. Among the field school sites were Revolutionary War fortifications at West Point Military Academy's Constitution Island and the Grand Village of the Kickapoo in Illinois. In 1978 Ed and Judy, under contract with the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, carried out the first historical archaeology in the Marshall Islands, at a 19th-century copra plantation on Likiep Atoll.

In 1980 Jelks established the Midwestern Archaeological Research Center (MARC) at ISU in response to the expansion of contract archaeology in Illinois. The MARC program has focused primarily on historical archaeological sites and standing structures. Ed has long been an outspoken advocate of the

significance of 19th and 20th century Euroamerican sites, which traditionally were ignored by cultural resource managers and contract archaeologists. His efforts did much to make protection of such historic sites standard procedure in both Illinois and Texas. Jelks served as MARC's Director until his retirement.

For many years Jelks has actively advocated the establishment of institutionalized archaeological standards, ethical codes, and professionalism. He was on the Society for American Archaeology's (SAA) Standards and Ethics Committee in the 1950s, he participated in the Airlie House conference on certification in 1974, and he chaired the SAA committee whose members formed the Society for Professional Archeology (SOPA) in 1976, and served as SOPA's first president. He currently serves on the American Association for the Advancement of Science's Professional Society Ethics Group and is on the editorial board of their quarterly newsletter.

Ed's research interests are most aptly described as diverse, but there are several prominent themes. He has a long-standing interest in artifact classification that includes work on European ceramics, French trade goods, and prehistoric lithics and ceramics. In 1961, he and Lathel Duffield devised a classification system and terminology for glass trade beads that has found wide acceptance. While serving as an alternate U.S. member of the History Commission of the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, he organized the Archaeology Work Group, which he chairs and which has met annually since 1981. The Commission recently published a standardized, multilingual set of terms for describing pottery decorations that is designed for computerization in English, Spanish, French, and Portuguese.

A common theme in many of Ed's writings and lectures is the importance of rigorous methods for interpreting the significance of *where* things are located in the archaeological record. He has developed a general methodology for analyzing and interpreting intrasite contexts and for inferring past human behavior from contextual data.

His long standing interest in statistics is reflected by his M.A. thesis (1952), which compares the horizontal distribution patterns of artifact types in unstratified sites. Later (1975), he wrote an important paper on the misuse of random sampling in archaeology in which he points out how nonjudgemental samples of archaeological sites has led to serious errors of interpretation. It is also noteworthy that in 1974 he and a sociologist coauthored a book on statistical probabilities in the game of bridge—the first such study ever done using computerized data—which has led many players to adjust the way they bid certain hands.

Ed continues to actively pursue his research and writing, with the support and assistance of Judy. They have recently finished compiling and editing a dictionary of North American archaeological terms which will be published in April 1988.

Edward Jelks has contributed significantly to the advancement of archaeology in general and particularly of historical archaeology, a field in which he is one of the pioneers. His contributions include advances in the methods of historical archaeology and in the conservation of historical remains. He played a leading role in the founding of the Society for Historical Archaeology. He has provided field, laboratory, and classroom training for many students who now pursue careers in archaeology, including a number who specialize in historical archaeology. For these accomplishments he has been awarded the 1988 J.C. Harrington award for outstanding contributions to the field of historical archaeology.