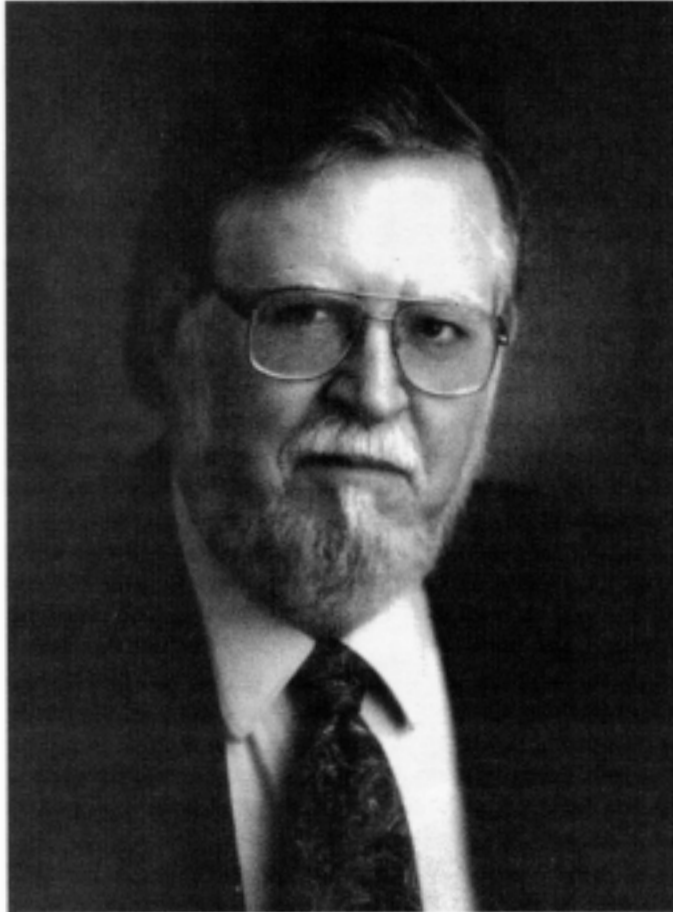


## J. C. Harrington Medal in Historical Archaeology



Roderick Sprague 2000

Roderick Sprague was born in Albany, Oregon, on 18 February 1933, and spent the first eight years of his life in Corvallis. His father was a plant pathologist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture attached to the Department of Botany at Oregon State College (now University). Rick's mother had been a school teacher from the age of 18, but stopped teaching for 20 years while she raised Rick and his two older sisters. She later returned to school and received a Master's in counseling.

Shortly before the start of World War II, the family moved to Mandan, North Dakota, his father having been transferred to the Northern Great Plains Experiment Station. North Dakota was a good place to be during the war because it was essentially unaffected. Rick's father was not only too old to get drafted, but he was classified as being in an essential job so could not volunteer.

During the war, meat (among other things) was rationed and shotgun shells were completely unavailable. The experiment station, however, had problems with ringneck pheasants getting into the experimental wheat plots so Rick's dad was issued shotgun shells to keep their numbers down. Rick hates pheasant meat to this day!

During his grade-school days, Rick often hitchhiked to the capitol, Bismarck, which was only six miles away. There he would visit the State Historical Museum with its extensive collections of Indian and pioneer artifacts. Even closer to Mandan was the state (now national) park that included Fort Lincoln from whence Custer left on his ill-fated last adventure, Fort McKeen, a later military post, and the Mandan Indian Slant village. George Will was excavating at the Native site and Rick would ride his bike out to it and watch them excavate by the hour. Rick's first collecting was undertaken in a reasonably scientific manner with maps and artifact labels in the dump of Fort McKeen. It is interesting to note that even then his interest was in historical-period materials.

Rick's interest in the local Indians was more with the living. Mandan was the division point on the Northern Pacific Railroad, hence trains stopped here longer than at most stations while they changed crews and let people off to eat non-dining-car food. To take advantage of this long stop, the local Mandan group met every passenger train and danced in formal dress. They collected coins from the crowd, especially from the troop trains during the war. After several years of watching as often as he could, the dancers knew Rick and even occasionally talked to him. This experience clearly affected his relationships with other tribes in later years. He learned to watch and listen without talking or intruding into their lives and learned to appreciate their culture and problems.

In 1947, the family moved back West when Rick's dad was offered a research and teaching job at Washington State College (now University) in Pullman, Washington. Rick attended Pullman High where he filled out a form for Washington State in which they asked for his interests. He put down anthropology and, as a freshman, he got Richard D. Daugherty as an advisor. Daugherty totally ignored Rick's intended major of agricultural engineering and kept putting him into classes which eventually led to a major in anthropology. The classes taught by the two social anthropologists, Allan H. Smith and William W. Elmendorf (both deceased in the last year), turned Rick on to ethnography.

Rick went on his first dig at McGregor Cave in the summer of 1952 with Daugherty and five other male students. This site was within a mile of the later and more-famous Marmes rockshelter. The cave was filled with roof fall and perishables, mostly cordage and worn-out mats used to line storage pits. It was a horrible experience and should have turned off anyone even thinking about archaeology. It was during a field trip that summer that Rick first met Luther Cressman, one of the Northwest's great anthropologists (and Margaret Mead's first husband). During the rest of his undergraduate career, Rick continued to work summers on a farm where he drove a crawler tractor and bucked bales, two reasons why his back is so bad today.

After graduating from WSC (now WSU), Rick worked on his Master's degree. WSC did not have a Master's in anthropology so he started in sociology with the guarantee that it would be anthropological in nature. In spite of making satisfactory progress on his graduate degree and being married, Rick was drafted into the Army at the age of 26 and sent to Fort Carson, Colorado, in December. Rick's second eight weeks of training was at Fort Bliss (a real misnomer) where, as Honor Graduate (a distinction he did not even know existed until five minutes before graduation), he was kept on post for the remainder of his two years. Texas Western College (now University of Texas, El Paso) provided some archaeological collections to see and Rick enjoyed his off-duty time in Juarez drinking cheap—but very good—beer.

Upon returning to Pullman, Sprague renewed his degree at Washington State University which could now be in anthropology as this degree had been instituted. After a year of additional class work and the writing of a thesis, T. Stell Newman and Rick received the first two Master's in anthropology presented by WSU. Again, it is interesting to note that Stell and Rick both went into historical archaeology. Stell's life and career were cut short by an automobile accident while working as an NPS archaeologist in the Pacific islands.

Rick spent the next year working to earn enough money to go on for a Ph.D. His job at the university was figuring chi squares on a rotary calculator. He spent a year doing what now takes about ten minutes on a computer. By then Rick's first son, Roderick IV, had been born. That summer Sprague field directed a burial dig on a Snake River island. All of the remains of a ranch

on the island were going to be flooded so he spent his evenings completely taking apart a farm wagon and other equipment to familiarize myself with the various metal parts. After that summer, Rick headed to Tucson to enroll in the University of Arizona doctoral program. Rick now gets some pleasure out of the fact that Berkeley and U of A offered him assistantships while the University of New Mexico, with only a post card, totally rejected the identical application.

Sprague had gone to U of A largely because he wanted to work with Edward Spicer in the area of culture change. This turned out to be a less-than-rewarding experience but Emil Haury was so supportive and easy to work with that Rick went back into archaeology. Other important people at Arizona in anthropology besides Haury were Fred Hulse, Ed Dozier, Robert Hackenberg, and Harry Getty (all deceased except Hackenberg who recently retired from the University of Colorado, Boulder). Within the Tree-Ring Laboratory, Bryant Bannister was also very supportive.

Historical archaeology was not held in high esteem at Arizona. Bunny Fontana, Arizona State Museum Ethnologist, was in the process of finishing his Johnny Wards Ranch report and Rick and he often discussed specific artifacts. Fellow graduate student Jim Ayres also shared an interest in historical archaeology but a friendship did not develop until about 1963 when they both took Arthur Woodward's Historical Archaeology course, the first time he taught it. Several future members of the SHA took that class.

After four years of course work, well beyond what was required to graduate, Rick returned to WSU to direct the excavation of 260 Palus Indian burials for the Corps of Engineers. This dig served as part of Sprague's dissertation along with archaeological, ethnohistorical, and ethnographic descriptions of Plateau burial practice, plus a review of burial terminology and Palus ethnography. Rick finished and defended his dissertation at the U of A in 1967. By then Haury had retired and Ray Thompson took over as his chairman. At this time Rick's only daughter, Kathy, was born.

Sprague took over operation of the WSU salvage program on the Snake River the next year. This involved Park Service funds distributed through Paul Schumacher, another good friend and an old-time historical archaeologist. All of the equipment that had been built up by the salvage program over the years was suddenly shifted to a non-salvage program. This, along with Rick still being treated as a graduate student by his fellow faculty, resulted in his deciding to move on. He and another young and "too aggressive" member of the department, Deward Walker, moved as a team nine miles away to the University of Idaho in Moscow in the fall of 1967.

At Idaho they were in a huge and unmanageable department of Social Science along with sociology, political science, history, and strangely, philosophy. After a year, they had convinced the dean to separate off anthropology along with sociology. After one semester as chairman, Walker quit and left Sprague as chair. Sprague agreed to take it for the rest of the year and finally got rid of the job 12½ years later. Walker moved to the University of Colorado the following year and Rick started the long process of hiring people to fill a department that had not benefited from the growth typical of other land grant universities in the post-war salvage archaeology period.

One of the first decisions was to emphasize historical archaeology because WSU, only nine miles away, did not. The second decision of Walker and Sprague was to not maintain a collection of American Indian skeletal material. These two decisions determined the direction of the department for the next thirty years.

The department had an agreement with the Nez Perce Tribe that was expanded eventually to all Plateau tribes within the United States that if any Native skeletal material were found, it would be analyzed within six months and then returned to the tribe for reburial. In that way they would not have to bother with burials. This was a serious miscalculation as it resulted in their being called in any time skeletal material was found because they did what the tribes wanted. It was NAGPRA 25 years before NAGPRA and a lot faster and more efficient. This program also resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of osteometric analyses and several theses based on these data. The reburial projects have become smaller with time but they still provided weekend work for students and continue to the present.

The first summer at Idaho, Rick did not have a field school program established so through his friendship with Jervis Swannack from the University of Arizona he was asked to direct the new Parks Canada excavations at the Roma site on Prince Edward Island. This introduced Rick to a whole group of Parks Canada researchers including John Rick, Pierre Nadon, and DiAnn Herst.

For many years, the only historical archaeology being done in the Northwest below the international border was done by the University of Idaho. Long-time programs such as the San Juan Island, Fort Colville, and Spalding/Fort Lapwai programs all began in 1970. The San Juan Island, Washington, project was a NPS program that utilized a field-school environment for the archaeology required to develop the new park. Work at English Camp, American Camp, San Juan Town, and the Hudson's Bay Bellevue Farm trained over 150 students and provided material for over a dozen theses. In addition to theses, there were annual reports covering nine years and a final summary report which only covered about half of the data collected, but was still over 1000 pages long. During this time period Rick became single again but often had his two children with him during the summer field season.

The fifth year of the project, which was the second year of work at American Camp, Rick returned to the island married to his former field lab director, Linda Ferguson. Linda wrote the annual artifact summaries for several years and analyzed the nine years of ceramics for her thesis. Those last several summers on San Juan Island with Linda were the best field seasons of Rick's career.

The Lake Roosevelt project was in a less idyllic place and time of year. The cold, early spring was when the draw downs occurred and the Columbia River in this area was filled with Canadian filth. The work was a mixture of prehistoric and historic work at old HBC Fort Colville. Much of the prehistoric work was on Hays Island where, if your boat motor died, so did you going over Kettle Falls. In spite of the weather, Sprague managed to drive the 150 miles each weekend and find students eager to work and take on thesis projects.

Other historic work has included Spalding and Fort Lapwai on the Nez Perce Reservation. A project in downtown Boise in the Chinese section was also conducted by the University within sight of Boise State University. In recent years, the projects for summer work have been less-well funded and not nearly as large, but more relaxed and enjoyable. Several mining camp excavations and surveys in Idaho have included Silver City, Sawtooth City, Florence, and three seasons at a Chinese site in Warren. On many of these projects, with the exception of San Juan Island and Warren, Sprague served as principal investigator while other staff members or advanced graduate students served as directors or field directors. One of Rick's sociology colleagues once accused him of printing his own money to support students because there was so much of it. Rick took that as a compliment.

Meanwhile, back at the lab, the work as department head and lab director were becoming too much for one person so Rick hired an out-of-work Ph.D. graduate from WSU, Ruthann Knudsen. Ruthann took over the routine salvage work and the operation of the site survey. After a few years, she left for a job in industry at twice the pay so Rick made a deal with the central administration where he would retire as department head but stay on as Lab Director. The laboratory would become an independent unit and any salary savings that were incurred the central administration could have. It was now possible for Rick to devote most of his energy to the operation of the lab.

The teaching he performed was now almost entirely historical archaeology with a course on Plateau ethnography every other year. It was an ideal teaching situation. All of his courses were double listed with WSU anthropology as well as the U of I and WSU history departments. The mixture of students was great. In later years, the WSU students were taught by interactive TV and, on occasion, even Idaho State University in Pocatello was included. Since U of I and WSU faculty can serve as full-fledged members of each other's graduate committees, Sprague had an opportunity to have many of the WSU Ph.D. students in his historical archaeology classes, students such as Bill Adams, Dave Brauner, and Tim Riordan. With the establishment of an historical archaeology Ph.D. in the UI history department, several individuals have completed the program including Priscilla Wegars, Herman Ronnenberg, and Annalies Corbin. Rick has served as the chairman for over 60 Master's theses, half in historical archaeology and including such society members

as Caroline Carley, Nick Fielder, Karl Gurcke, Jonathan Horn, Keith Landreth, Smoke Pfeiffer, Karl Roenke, Steve Phillips, Linda Sprague, Darby Stapp, Donna Turnipseed, Dick Waldbauer, Bob Weaver, and of course, the Canadian crowd: Pierre Beaudet, Serge Rouleau, Willis Stevens, and Karlis Karklins.

Rick's dedication to teaching and research have not gone unnoticed. He received the University of Idaho Library, Faculty Award for Outstanding Service in 1986, and was named Outstanding Professor by Phi Kappa Phi in 1996. The following year the Boise State University Senior Award in Anthropology was named the "Roderick Sprague Award." The J. C. Harrington Award is a fitting addition to this list.

Sprague's involvement with the Society for Historical Archaeology goes back three decades. He was at the founding meeting in 1967, and has been to all but two of them since. The first absence, in 1987, was unavoidable as Rick was in Inner Mongolia as a Visiting Scholar at the time. The second time was when his back failed him and he couldn't travel to the 1992 meeting in Jamaica. This will always be a sore point with him and Linda.

Since joining the society in 1968, Sprague has held numerous societal positions including Regional Coordinator for Research, Northwest (1968-1977), Board of Directors (1970-1971), Secretary-Treasurer (1971-1974), Review Editor (1977-1997), Parliamentarian (1984-present), and Archivist (1987-1998). He has been on the Editorial Board since 1977, and is the only person to have served as President on two different occasions (1976 and 1990). This involvement reflects Rick's strong interest in and dedication to the society and the discipline of historical archaeology.

Editorial duties have been a continuing part of Sprague's work load; not only the usual editing of lab reports and theses but also of several journals and serials. These include *Northwest Anthropological Research Notes* (Associate Editor and Editor; 1967 to the present), *American Antiquity* (Assistant Editor for Current Research, Northwest; 1968-1981), *University of Idaho Anthropological Reports* (Editor; 1968-1997), *Anthropological Monographs of the University of Idaho* (Series Editor; 1970 to present), *Abstracts in Anthropology* (Advisory Editor, Northwest; 1973-1990), *North American Archaeologist* (Associate Editor for Northwest Historical Archaeology; 1977-present), and *Quarterly Review of Archaeology* (Northwest U.S. Contributing Editor; 1983-1993). He is currently the society's copy editor.

While Rick's research interests are many, he is particularly fond of beads. It was while working on his Master's that Rick first encountered these little baubles. Knowing little about them himself, he sent off a sample to Arthur Woodward who was well versed in trade goods. Seeing their research potential, Rick subsequently began a lifelong study of beads with emphasis on those made using the Prosser process. Having kindred interests, Rick and I met at the SHA conference in Washington in 1971. This led to the publication of *A Bibliography of Glass Trade Beads in North America* which we co-authored. With typical generosity, he let me be the senior author to give my CV a boost. We have been friends ever since and I highly value our friendship.

Since retirement, Rick has kept busy doing the research and writing he enjoys so much. Research not supported by contracts but done for pleasure has involved bells (even prehistoric Southwest copper bells), buttons, and especially beads, both glass and ceramic, largely with Karlis Karklins and more recently also with Lester Ross. Other areas of interest which Rick has recently published on include the history of anthropological research in the Northwest, especially historical archaeology, bibliographies, and a study of Rick's ethnographic father figure, James A. Teit. Serving on the editorial board of the Plateau volume of the *Handbook of American Indians* resulted in a chapter on the Palus Indians and another (as co-author) on the history of Plateau anthropological research. A current effort is to bring together over a dozen authors in a book on the subject of Plateau burials. Recent writing on previous archaeological work in Skagway, Alaska, for the National Park Service has been rewarding for Rick because his grandfather was a newspaper man there during the gold rush and Rick's father was born in Skagway in 1901. Sprague's personal work in recent years has also turned to doing more to support the tribal view on repatriation with court appearances in Nebraska, Montana, Washington, and Idaho. Expert witness work for the Yakama, Nez Perce, Kootenai, and Coeur d'Alene tribes has taken a major portion of his time. This work has been

more ethnographic than archaeological. Rick's interests have obviously rubbed off on his youngest son, Alex, who—ignoring his father's advice—is majoring in anthropology. Fred, his oldest son from his second family, has wisely heeded his father's advice.

The Society for Historical Archaeology has always been a source of pleasure to Roderick Sprague and it is rewarding to know that the society has seen fit to present the J. C. Harrington Medal to him for his achievements in the field of historical archaeology. I can think of no better person to be so honored on the threshold of the new millennium. I can only hope that his achievements and dedication to research, education, and this society will inspire others to similarly give unselfishly of themselves to further both our profession and society in the 21st century.

KARLIS KARKLINS