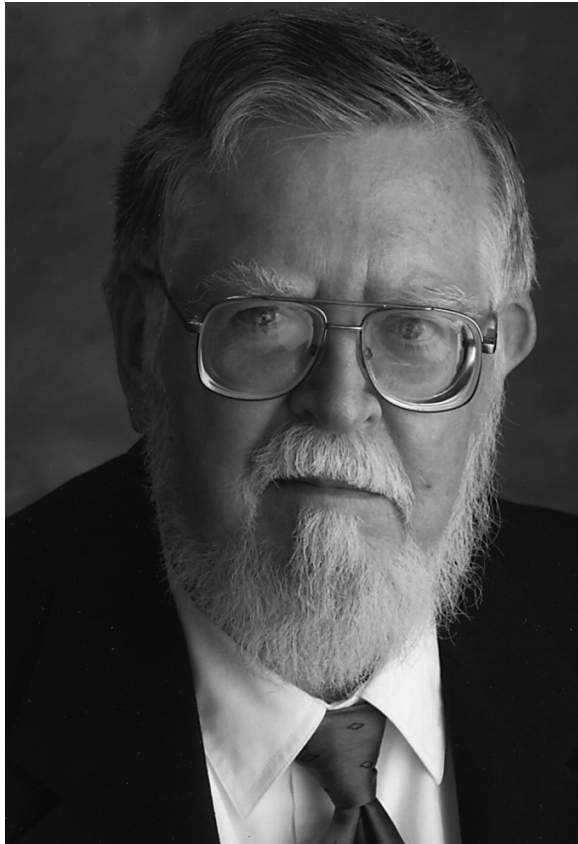


Carol V. Ruppé Distinguished Service Award



Roderick Sprague 2004

There are those of you who believe I have been the society editor from the beginning of time—part of a package deal when the society was founded. I want you to know that when I became the SHA editor in early 1978, Roderick Sprague was already the "Old Man of the SHA." Volunteerism according to many sources has been steadily declining in the United States for the past 25–50 years. It is now "me first" and "you second," or third, in a list of priorities. Rick either has not heard about this trend or has ignored it. He has actually had a professional career of volunteerism, giving freely of his time to students and his profession, while others found excuses as to why they could not help.

By the time I became the SHA editor, Rick had already served the society by being one of its founders, having attended the organizational meeting as well as being regional coordinator for research in the northwest from 1968 to 1977, general program chairperson for the second annual society meeting in 1969 (held in Tucson), a member of the board of directors for 1970 and 1971, secretary-treasurer from 1971 to 1974, and SHA president in 1976 (actually a three-year term with one year each as president-elect, president, and past president). Shortly before my appointment he had agreed to become a member of the editorial board and book reviews editor for *Historical Archaeology*. Being a gracious person, he offered to step aside so I could select "my own" review editor.

Actually, one of my best editorial decisions was to decline that offer. A better mentor would have been hard to find.

When we started working together I was essentially unknown to him, and I only knew him by professional reputation (had not heard about his personal reputation at that time). I have clear memories of our first contacts, thinking that my telephone company was to blame for bad service to Idaho. I now know that Rick is legendary for his telephone manner, but it was new to me in 1978. I would call Rick and he would answer. I would ask a question or make a comment, and then it seemed like the line had gone dead. I would shake the phone, thinking that maybe something was loose in my receiver, or wait for that dreaded automated voice giving me instructions about how I could make a call. Finally though, we were reconnected and I could hear Rick. As time passed, our telephone contacts normalized, and today I can call my friend and colleague and always share a pleasant but information-filled conversation.

Truly, I have learned that Rick gives of himself to others because he cares. He cares for his students, about historical archaeology, and people and believes part of his reason for existing is to share his talents with others, giving of his time to help others and causes in which he believes.

It would have been extremely easy for a person who had served the society so extensively and effectively during its first decade of existence to feel it was time for others to serve SHA. Fortunately, that is not part of Rick's nature. He has continued to the present to give generously of himself to society service.

Rick remained the SHA reviews editor from 1977 until he decided to retire from the job in 1997. During much of that time, beginning in 1984 and still today, he continues to serve as society parliamentarian; he remains an active member of the society Editorial Advisory Committee, essentially never missing a meeting or never refusing to chair or serve on subcommittees. Rick was society archivist from 1987 until 1998; and in 2002, shortly after resigning from a five-year period of being the society copy-editor contractor during which he standardized many editorial practices, he agreed to accept the position of associate copy editor. During the late 1980s and early 1990s, Rick (in his words) spent "five years of endless drudgery" working to put the historical archaeology bibliography (begun about 20 years earlier by John Cotter) into a publishable format. Shortly after the society established a Web site in the mid 1990s, the bibliography was posted on the SHA site as *A Bibliography of Historical Archaeology in North America*. He gave Cotter full credit for creating the bibliography.

In an unprecedented move, Rick was nominated from the floor to run for a second term as society president. From 1989–1991 he again graciously and actively served the society as its president-elect, president, and past president. Was this enough SHA volunteerism for Rick? Certainly not! Today he still is an active member of the Editorial Advisory Committee, is associate copy editor, serves on the History Committee, is the Inter-Society Relations Committee representative to the Council on America's Military Past, and, in 2003, agreed to chair a subcommittee on curation policy. Rick has served on and chaired many additional SHA committees, but when asked for a list, he responded that there are "far too many" committees to note.

A full career of volunteerism to SHA! However, Rick has and still volunteers his time just as freely to other endeavors, especially the Society of Bead Researchers and editing the *Journal of Northwest Anthropology* for 36 years. All this volunteerism Roderick Sprague has done in addition to having a highly visible, busy, full, and lustrous career as an academician and researcher—contributions already recognized by his receipt in 2000 of The Society for Historical Archaeology J. C. Harrington Medal, an award recognizing individuals for lifetime achievement in historical archaeology. A summary of Rick's professional career and full presentation of all his accomplishments in historical archaeology can be found in *Historical Archaeology* 34 (4):1–6.

Rick is possibly The Society for Historical Archaeology's greatest asset—a volunteer of the highest order for almost four decades.