

Preface

"Now we are at a crossroads where things are not the way they were in the past."

This statement by Dogrib elder Harry Simpson (see Andrews and Zoe, Ch. 10) aptly characterizes the evolving relationship between archaeology and the First Peoples¹ of Canada. We have thus used part of Harry Simpson's statement in the title of this volume that consists of many different perspectives, Native and non-Native alike, on a variety of issues concerning contemporary archaeology in Canada.

The volume had its origins in the 27th Canadian Archaeological Association (CAA) annual meeting that was held in Edmonton in May of 1994. A significant number of papers on Native-oriented archaeology was presented. The role that archaeology has in the affairs of Indigenous peoples worldwide continues to increase, as does the role that these peoples have in archaeology. This is very much the case in Canada today. The papers dealing with this theme that were presented at the CAA deserved, we felt, a broader audience than a three-day meeting alone.

With some modification, the basic organization of the volume closely reflects the primary topics represented by four sessions organized for the Edmonton conference:

- "The Access to Archaeology Programme" (organizer/chair—Sheila Greer);
- "Cultural Resource Management on First Nations Lands" (organizer/chair—George Nicholas);
- "Traditional Knowledge and Archaeology" (organizers/chairs—Tom Andrews and Sheila Greer); and
- Plenary Session: "Relationships between First Nations and Archaeology" (organizer/chair—Jack Ives).

The chapters in this volume represent some but not all of the conference papers. We have subsequently extended the breadth of the original sessions by soliciting contributions to fill gaps, to illustrate noteworthy studies or projects, and to provide greater geographic representation.

We have aimed for a high degree of cohesiveness both for the volume as a whole and for each of the major sections. To achieve this, we provide both an introductory essay and an afterword that examine the main topics represented, highlight important issues, and place our subject in a broader perspective. Professor Bruce Trigger's Foreword takes the pulse of current issues and affairs concerning the First Peoples of Canada and their evolving relationship with archaeologists and others.

Despite strenuous efforts on our part, we have been unable to provide as much representation from eastern Canada as hoped. Invitations to contribute papers were sent to over 20 individuals there; while our invitation generated great interest and an initial commitment to participate on the part of many, the exegeses of recent budget cuts and an increased work load forced the withdrawal of most of these. There are thus many important collaborative projects between archaeologists and First Peoples that are not represented in the volume, but which deserve the attention of a broad audience—and one not limited to either Canada or the United States. Many of these are cited in the following chapters. Finally, we note that the diversity of approaches represented in this volume, and the successes and failures, problems and prospects, reflect a larger number of projects and programs elsewhere in North America that are worthy of attention (see various contributions to the "Working Together" section of the *SAA Bulletin*; and Swidler et al. 1997).

A Few Words on Words

Watchdogs of political correctness will note that the terms *prehistory* and *prehistoric* are conspicuously present in some papers and conspicuously absent in others. We have chosen to keep the terminology that individual authors have used rather than insist on a consistent terminology. To do so, we feel, would have imposed a degree of censorship. As many others have argued already, the term *prehistory* is often misconstrued to mean "without history," implying that

¹ We have attempted to follow accepted convention in our use of the term "First Peoples," and do not use it synonymously with "First Nations," which was coined by "Indian Bands" and thus excludes Inuit, Métis, and Non-Status Indians (see Public Works and Government Services Canada 1994: 3).

archaeologists present or support the view that Indigenous peoples had no history. What *prehistory* actually refers to is archaeology done without use of, or access to, written records by the investigators of past human societies—a tremendous difference, and this meaning is conveyed by all standard archaeology textbooks. In fact, what archaeologists have been demonstrating for a very long time is that prehistoric peoples *do* have a history—that there is nothing static in these lifeways. Furthermore, much of the debate over terminology can be viewed as a red herring in some respects: since most archaeologists are aware of the debate, those who continue to use *prehistory*, use the term in a relatively exact manner. Nonetheless, this term and others like it have been so frequently misconstrued that they are used with decreasing frequency, in part, out of respect for those people who may be offended by their popular meaning.

A similar problem can be found with the terms *resources* and *resource management*. For example, Bruce Trigger and several authors in this volume contend that referring to archaeological sites as cultural resources may unintentionally support the belief that a resource is something that, by definition, is/should/must be exploited. While many would agree that these and related terms are not ideal, they are so wholly entrenched in the archaeological literature that it is difficult to replace them, and an alternative terminology is not obvious. So as with *prehistory*, archaeologists continue to use the terms, but recognize their limitations. Yet here we agree fully with Lightfoot's (1995) recent plea to dissolve the often arbitrary distinction between prehistoric and historic archaeology, and to get down to the business at hand—business that, not surprisingly, transcends either approach. Taking this further, Moss and Erlandson (1995: 34) state: "...there should be no epistemological division between the study of prehistoric and historic societies. Instead, this 'boundary' should be regarded as a continuous transition that leads to the living descendants of precontact groups."

As an interesting corollary to this debate on semantics, many Native peoples continue to use the term "Indian" to describe themselves (a term that most anthropologists working in Canada now shun), and consider "First Nation" as pretentious. Use of "Indian"—a term originally identifying them as part of the East Indies, is arguably no less damaging to Aboriginal identity than "prehistory" is. Other groups, such as the Dene Nation, view the term "Indian" as pejorative; they prefer the term *Dene*, which means "people," or, whenever possible, the specific names of the various culture/language groups (e.g., Dogrib, Slavey). However, at another level, even these names have a pejorative connotation in that they have typically been described by anthropologists and are not often recognized in the "first" language. As these examples illustrate, there is often a sense of frustration in how we speak both of each other and of the past because the issue of synonymy is so complex and sensitive.²

How then do we avoid problems of misinterpretation and charges of double standards? Perhaps the simplest and most effective way is to make the effort to make certain that what we write cannot be misunderstood, and for Aboriginal readers not to assume intentions or meanings that aren't present. Developing respect for each other, after all, requires trust.

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² In New Zealand, the term "Native" is decried by the Maori. The North American situation, however, is distinct in that First Peoples represent many different distinct societies, whereas the Maori only one.

Swidler, N., R. Anyon, K. Dongoske, and A. Downer (editors)

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