contribution to 50 years after airlie house, by alice kehoe — january 2023

Airlie House Report, p. iv: *That nearly all of the people who were asked to attend were sufficiently*

*concerned to abort their own plans and attend on such short notice served to underscore*

*everyone's concern.*

Introduction

About a year ago, while looking for something else, I came across my packet of the Airlie Report and my notes, was surprised to see it filed away where it was, thinking I would never use it. I left it there . .  WHERE? I've looked in closets and bookshelves and the attic and cannot find it.  Since I could download the Report and the relevant SAA Bulletins and had my chapter in the Public Archaeology handbook, for under 3000 words I think I don't need to spend any more hours searching for my packet which was mostly the Report and my discussion notes.

About women in archaeology, having Nat Woodbury and Hester Davis at the conference was significant.  Neither had an academic career nor led a major project in archaeology.  Both did major projects in structuring the discipline and profession. Hester built what Bob McGimsey envisioned and did the clap-on-the-back old-boy work to get funded, for Arkansas. Hester's brother E. Mott Davis was "the archaeologist" and Hester sort of rode on his coattails at first, as I did on my husband's and Nat did on Dick Woodbury's, her husband.    You probably know Hester's contribution to *Grit-Tempered*, the book of essays on women in SE archaeology. Nat found her calling as a facilitator, which is what she had on her business card: Nathalie F. S. Woodbury, Facilitator.  She saved the AAA from ruin when its professor treasurer failed to notice the part-time office clerk wasn't depositing checks.  Members began to write him, he asked the clerk and she proudly showed him how she had hidden all the checks, in back of file drawers, under cabinets . . . they did clear this up, and Nat jumped on it to lead the profs who were officers, to agree to hire a professional person as executive director.  She recruited Ed Lehman, and with her explaining anthros to him, they constructed a professional organization. Then Nat went for SAA, and organized it.  Dick Woodbury had been an SAA president, and respect for him carried a lot of weight in accepting Nat's plan.  You could say that both Hester and Nat played the woman's role of sustaining the men --with a twist.

1. Apparently it was in June 1974 that one afternoon, the telephone rang and the caller asked me whether I could come to a small conference on the needs of archaeology, expenses paid. The Airlie House Report says we met on August 27 for five days; apparently my university had not yet begun classes on the third Monday in August. The phone call was totally unexpected. In 1974 I was only ten years past my Ph.D. and had published little. Nor had I been active in education or outreach, unless one counts my husband Tom Kehoe and I starting the Saskatchewan Archaeological Society and a newsletter for it in 1963, when Tom was Provincial Archaeologist for the province. We did have three children and I paid attention to their experiences in their public schools, in Regina, Saskatchewan, Lincoln, Nebraska, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin where we settled in 1968. So far as I can figure out, I must have been suggested by Nathalie Woodbury, my professor at Barnard twenty years earlier, with her close friend Hester Davis agreeing. Hester was one of the women in SAA who was role model and friend to us other women in that men-dominated profession. Going to a seminar in a handsome setting, fed and housed well, was a wonderful treat for me. A whole week with no housework, no cooking, no being mommy! Instead, being with *colleagues* who might even listen to what I wanted to say, as an archaeologist, in spite of being a woman. I can recall the building, and the modest swimming pool, I recall asking Brian Fagan, also relaxing in the pool at the end of the day, where he got the attractive sport shirt he had been wearing, and he answering that his wife had sewn it for him. What do I recall of the seminar discussions? Alas, nothing. McGimsey comments, page 78 in the *Report*, that he was surprised that the seminar participants wanted to talk about outreach to the public, more than about communication within the profession. Of the seven participants, only Frank Hole was a senior faculty member in a major university. This unusual group of outliers, professionally, may have been the result of the very late invitations, telephoned in late June. I recall someone, seems like it was Bob McGimsey, saying that many people invited had already been in the field (back then, unavailable by phone) or had their August already organized beyond such late adjustment. Given the emphasis on outreach, I could contribute, from our experience in creating an organization for avocationals in Saskatchewan, our then-few years participating in the very active Wisconsin Archeological Society led by deeply respected avocationals, and my book *Hunters of the Buried Years* written and published for Saskatchewan schools.

2. The Airlie seminars must be put into perspective of the then-affiliated SAA and AAA. AAA handled administrative business and publications for SAA until 1984, when a federal IRS ruling questioned tax exemptions for publications and other activities by learned societies (SAA *Bulletin* 1-2, 1983). SAA's leadership decided to separate from AAA, a fait accompli announced to the membership at the business meeting in 1984. Ten years earlier, at Airlie, we all assumed that AAA could and might pursue activities of interest to archaeologists, considering that academically employed archaeologists were mostly in departments of Anthropology. Tom King, in our seminar, represented CRM archaeologists whose numbers were growing, though not yet dominating. Paid by businesses and organizations outside academia, CRM archaeologists are oriented toward the public. In hindsight, the Airlie seminars were groping in a limbo between the earlier premise that archaeology worked to find and describe buried culture histories, and Binford's New Archaeology rejecting that goal. None of the participants in the Communication seminar followed New Archaeology's version of science, though we all understood a scientific approach. Parenthetically, historians of science Mark Solovey and George Reisch have documented that the National Science Foundation was created as part of the American Cold War against the U.S.S.R., fostering a narrow physical sciences program like what we now term STEM. We at the seminar accepted culture histories as our task and privilege to pursue. We weren't concerned with promoting "the sciences" as lab-based careers. SAA was slow to accept that public outreach is important. When Don Fowler became SAA president in 1985, he commissioned a Public Relations Committee, inviting James Schoenwetter to be its chairperson. Schoenwetter, a faculty member at ASU in Tempe, was a paleobotanist archaeologist in a large department mainly oriented toward scientific methods. He had no particular experience nor interest in public outreach beyond collaborating with local people conversant with botanical and ecological features. As a good citizen in our professional organization, he accepted Fowler's charge, then phoned me asking me to join the new committee––we were friends from fieldwork while students. After a few years, I took over as chair of the Public Relations Committee. SAA refused to allocate any money to it, not even the modest request for $40 to cover telephone, copying, and postal costs, nor was I asked to participate in SAA Board or other executive meetings. My committee was almost entirely women in part-time positions doing public outreach programs, women held down by the marginalization of women in the profession.

When a combination of CRM expansive growth and preparation for Secretary Lujan of the Department of Interior's order for more public programs and outreach in 1990, woke up SAA, it participated in a funded conference at Fort Burgwin, 1989 (SAA Bulletin 1989), launching a Public Education staff position in SAA and espousal of outreach efforts. Neither I nor my committee were invited to Fort Burgwin, and our committee disappeared. We were invited to a 1991 conference in Ohio near the great Hopewell site at Newark, hosted by avocational archaeologist Paul Hooge and the local state archaeologist, Bradley Lepper. Called the Formal Education Subcommittee, its agenda was directed toward "teaching about archaeology" in K-12 schools (*not* "teaching archaeology"). We stayed in a guest house offering twelve beds, two to a bedroom. The first evening, we divided up into twos, for the bedrooms. Eleven women and one man, Ed Friedman, a federal Bureau of Reclamation archaeologist who chaired the SAA's Public Education Committee. Looking around the conference table, a nervous silence. Finally, I volunteered to share a bedroom with Ed. Bearded and burly, he stuck out like a sore thumb, and during the three days, seemed as uncomfortable with this gaggle of girls.

3. The Fort Burgwin conference, like the Airlie House seminars, was organized between the National Park Service and SAA. Fort Burgwin's was to discuss means of combating "looting and vandalism". Immediately, according to records, it appeared that the most feasible solution was public education. The National Park Service set up two databases, LOOT to list prosecuted cases of looting, and LEAP as "a list of educational products resulting from archaeology" (SAA Bulletin:10). Maybe, if Bob McGimsey had trumpeted the Airlie seminars as galvanized by looting, they would have gained more attention.

My impression is that, first, HesterBob, as we all called the hardworking pair, had the wide experience and colleagues to map out what SAA, Bob's domain when he became president in 1974, should do. From that standpoint, Airlie listed a totality of goals that was overwhelming. None jumped out the way "Looting and Vandalism" did in 1989. Perhaps, Bob's success in organizing Arkansas, which is still exemplary, could not be replicated on the more diverse and extended national base.

*Postscript*: While I have never considered myself an expert in the niche of public education about archaeology, concern about the field has engaged me enough that I was asked to contribute the chapter on the topic in North America to an Oxford Handbook (Kehoe 2011). My standpoint has been that of a citizen, a steward. That brought me into a committee for K-12 Social Studies in Wisconsin, convened two or three times yearly by our state superintendent for Social Studies in Wisconsin Department of Education, H. Michael Hartoonian. From about the time of the Airlie meeting until Hartoonian became president of the National Council for the Social Studies in 1995 and left his state position, I saw the reality of K-12 education. Ground-truthing. Hartoonian was focused on Social Studies developing good citizens for our democracy, at that time a liberal viewpoint not much contested. Teaching about archaeology, or looking to archaeology to provide exemplars, would offer little to that goal.

On a very different plane, I've researched the history of American archaeology (Kehoe 1998). SAA's president *represents* professional archaeologists in America without, in the 1970s, even the RPA to support imposing agenda or practices. McGimsey brought reason and experience to his presidency, excellently thought out in the Airlie House Report. He could advise but he couldn't *command*.

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