

AMERICAN ANTIQUITY

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EDITORIALS

THANK YOU . . . Many comments regarding the initial issue of AMERICAN ANTIQUITY, complimentary and constructively critical, have come to the Editor's desk. For these, and for the spirit which prompted the senders, the staff is sincerely grateful. We probably realize as fully as you do the shortcomings of that issue, and it is our earnest purpose to progressively minimize those faults as our growing experience and your growing coöperation permit. We are pleased that in general you approve of the journal and its form, and that you appreciate some of our early, immature attempts to insure its interest and value to you.

STUDENTS AND COLLECTORS . . . Unfortunately, there is a classification that divides those who rise to the name "archaeologist" into two distinct and separate groups: students and collectors. I believe that such a classification is fundamentally wrong. All archaeological students, if not themselves collectors, study the collections of others, since collections that are properly made and catalogued are store-houses of facts pertinent to scientific problems. And all collectors are potential students, since fact-revealing materials that pass through their hands may at any time engage their interest in some related problem.

It is true that many collectors of "relics" are in no sense students of archaeology, since their interests are limited to the possessing of beautiful or odd "rocks," pots or other souvenir materials. The archaeologist's interests are essentially historical; materials in collections, whether beautiful or unattractive, peculiar or characteristic, perfect or fragmentary, excite his interest primarily to the extent that they reflect human customs and activities. Fortunately for the progress of archaeology, however, man is normally possessed of curiosity which, inducing one to seek an answer to some question rising from material traits or associations, leads to research.

With research the first step towards becoming a student of archaeology has been taken. However, the all-important second step, which has to do with method, is not infrequently omitted by the amateur student. Unmethodical excavations have resulted in the permanent destruction of vast quantities of valuable information in the American archaeological field. This wholesale miscarriage of good intentions on the part of amateurs continues year after year. Research can only produce desirable results if correct technical methods are employed. Even in instances when research does not involve excavation, sincerely interested but untrained students have labored long and in vain, their well-intended efforts serving to confuse issues and distort answers rather than to clarify and solve problems.

Axiomatically, the untrained student needs training. How can this essential training be made available to him? The accumulated research and experience, through several generations, of students of anthropology, of which archaeology is but an artificially separated subdivision, have resulted in the formulating of improved (continuously improving, we hope) field and laboratory technical methods. The student may acquire a knowledge of these, and should when possible, through channels afforded at those universities where anthropology is taught as a major subject.

However, all sciences, and archaeology can be no exception in this, have profited and continue to profit from contributions of students whose training has been acquired through privately conducted studies. Anyone who can read, is sufficiently interested to apply himself, and has access to qualified sources of information, can equip himself in ever increasing degree to take an accepted place in the ranks of archaeological students. As in the case of any science, certain types of highly technical work are best undertaken or directed by specialists, which leaves a broadly adequate variety of research tasks for the amateur.

Unquestionably, the activities of amateurs, when motivated by the purpose to find the truth at any price, and when conducted with studious care and according to methods which insure accurate and complete data, can be of inestimable value to the professional student. In fact, it is difficult to see how the work of the specialist can progress satisfactorily, if indeed it can survive, without the support of a constantly growing element of amateur students.

AMERICAN ANTIQUITY, acting as the instrument of the Society for American Archaeology, hopes that it may serve to some extent in providing the means of a mutually beneficial contact between professional and amateur students of American archaeology.

Note to Affiliates

American Antiquity is the official publication of your Society. Your officers desire to have it meet the needs of both non-professional and professional students of the archaeological history of the Indians. We would welcome any suggestions or criticisms you have to offer.

The value of *American Antiquity* to you will be measured in terms of the quality and quantity of its contents. The amount of information it will contain is determined by the funds obtained through the dues of Affiliates. Additional funds are needed if future issues of the journal are to measure up to the standards which we have set for it. We suggest that you will be furthering your own interests if you will assist in securing new Affiliates of the Society. Anyone interested in the history and manner of living of the Indians may send in an application. As an Affiliate, you are empowered to act as first endorser for your friends. We will send to those names and addresses which you furnish us an invitation to join our Society. This letter will state that it is being sent at your suggestion.

Please help in making *American Antiquity* the kind of magazine you want.

CARL E. GUTHE
Secretary-Treasurer
4017 Museums Building
Ann Arbor, Michigan

DO YOU ALWAYS AGREE? . . . Each year, students of American archaeology meet here and there, by twos or by scores, and discuss mutual problems and conflicting theories and ideas with an unrestricted exercise of the right to individual freedom of opinion. Again and again you and I have heard at these sessions interesting and profitable controversies.

Your Editor believes that science flourishes, flowers and progresses to a productive fruitfulness in such an atmosphere of critical controversy. There is a section in this journal reserved for "Correspondence." What better outlet could there be for one's controversial opinions? We hope that our readers take full advantage of it.