

**ARCHAEOLOGY AND HUMANITY:  
A TRIBUTE TO PAM COLARICH, 1954-1978**

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**ABSTRACT**

Archaeology offers humanity one of its best opportunities for discovering who it really is. Through such self-discovery, it may be possible to design and implement a more humane future. This goal is as important to the future of archaeology as the scientific curiosity that has fueled much of its past. As we move toward the new millennium, archaeologists must seize the opportunity to connect with our stakeholders, to provide them with the benefits of our knowledge, and to secure their future support. A more people-oriented archaeology will prosper in the 21st century through its contribution to the well-being of humanity.

**PAM COLARICH: ARCHAEOLOGIST AND HUMANITARIAN**

On September 25, 1978, a commercial airliner with almost 200 people aboard was struck by a smaller plane while on final approach to the San Diego airport. Both planes fell to ground with the loss of all aboard, killing a number of people on the ground as well. The PSA disaster was the most horrific crash ever experienced in California, and at the time, one of the worst in the country. Everyone lost in the disaster left loved ones behind, fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers, neighbors, co-workers, colleagues, and friends. As so many helpless lives came to a sudden and tragic end, many, many stories ended prematurely, stopped short of the conclusion, or a believable, palatable conclusion. One of those stories was that of Pauline "Pam" Colarich.

Pam Colarich was just shy of her 24th birthday when she boarded the ill-fated flight in Sacramento. She had grown wary of flying, and decided to take the train for her trip to San Diego. But Amtrack went on strike, and there wasn't time to drive. So she took the plane, instead, and the rest is history.

For a year prior to her death, Pam had been employed as an archaeologist by Caltrans. Prior to that, she had worked as a seasonal archaeologist

at Six Rivers National Forest. Pam attended Cal State Hayward, where she earned her B.A. degree in Anthropology. I knew Pam for the last 4 years of her life, while at Hayward.

Pam cared about people, from all walks of life, cultures and passions. Prior to her death, Pam had been assisting Caltrans with the I-15 project through Moosa Canyon, in northern San Diego County. Moosa Canyon contained archaeological sites deemed sacred by the Luiseño people, including a ceremonial eagle burial, and problems soon arose regarding the treatment of the sites. An impasse between Caltrans and the Luiseño became difficult for all involved. In fact, the SCA's newsletters from the late 1970s are full of articles about Moosa Canyon and the situation there (cf. May 1978, 1979a, 1979b, 1979c, 1979d; SCA 1978a).

In her duties as an archaeologist, Pam met the Luiseño representatives, and soon befriended them, and was befriended by them. Being idealistic and conscientious, Pam sought ways to bridge the gap between her employer and new-found friends. At the time of her death, she was having an exceptionally positive effect on the negotiations between the Luiseño and Caltrans. But she died.

News of Pam's death touched many hearts. People observed her passing in many different ways. Many attended her funeral. At the Malki Museum, Pam's friends chose to construct a ceremonial roundhouse, and dedicate it to Pam and Native California's Vietnam War dead. A number of obituaries were published, including one that I wrote. In an obituary published by the Riverside Archaeological Society, Pam was described as "an archaeologist and humanitarian" (SCA 1978b).

An archaeologist and a humanitarian. That "humanitarian" word didn't mean too much to me back in 1978. After all, we were all a lot younger then. Times were different. Archaeology was different. But times are different now. So is archaeology, in this post-NAGPRA era.

Today, we stand at the brink of the 21st century, at the edge of a new millennium. It is a very exciting time, and yet one full of anticipation and anxiety, too. Many among us wonder what face archaeology will present to the world in the coming decades. And there are some who question whether the field will survive at all. I personally have great hopes for our field, because I really believe that it can contribute to humanity, providing we all find the humanitarian inside ourselves. Humanitarian. There's that word again. Archaeologist and humanitarian is just another way of saying archaeology and humanity, and that's what this paper is all about.

## ARCHAEOLOGY AND HUMANITY

In his classic work, *An Invitation to Archaeology*, James Deetz (1967:3) noted that, "We cannot define archaeology except in reference to anthropology, the discipline of which it is a part." I might add that we cannot define archaeology except in reference to humanity, the stakeholders in all of our endeavors. Indeed, humanity is anthropology and anthropology, humanity. Thus, archaeology is undoubtedly humanity, too. And, archaeologists, it seems, have an inherent responsibility as humanitarians. Now, I wonder how many of us consider ourselves humanitarians? What about social scientists? Did you ever wonder about the social part of our title? Well, I think that's another way of saying

"humanity." You know, as in humanity scientists, or perhaps human scientists. Human scientists. Now I like that term. I think it's a good one for the new millennium. Human scientist on the one hand, human being on the other. Pam Colarich was a good human scientist, and a fine human being. Actually, most of us are, or at least, most of us have the potential for being so, if we only try.

So just what exactly does it take to be a human being? I mean a human scientist? Well, here's what I think. First and foremost, human scientists recognize the relationship which exists between archaeology and humanity. In other words, we can't really put the word "human" or "social" in front of scientist if we think our ultimate responsibility is to inanimate objects, no matter how cool they are. In the long run, people are a lot cooler. That's why we're anthropologists. Remember? We study humankind, listen to their languages, identify their customs, track their physical evolutionary process, and care for their clutter. And sometimes, it seems like we forget that the 2-legged human animal we study includes our own kind. We create a scientifically-etic approach to our work, believing that we can truly divorce ourselves from our own humanity. But even if we could, should we? In other words, can a science built on its own humanity divorce itself from the foundation and still stand? As we approach the millennium, it seems to some in our profession that the science is beginning to shake in its instability. By remembering the humanitarian inherent in the archaeologist, we can shore up our profession's foundation, and enter the new era confident and relevant in our purpose.

Perhaps we can best shore up our foundation by remembering our stakeholders, those people who are enriched by our work, are affected by it, or pay the bills. That's pretty much everyone, at least potentially. In many ways, all people, past, present, and future hold stakes in archaeology.

The people of the past hold stakes in our work for very obvious reasons. We acquire, analyze, curate, conserve, and interpret almost every detail of their past existence. We owe it to them to get it right, to do our jobs properly with skill and restraint, and to remember that they were as we are, human beings worthy of respect. Through our work, we can help fill in the gaps of history, correct

misconceptions about the past, address past wrongs, and help empower the descendants in their contemporary efforts at perpetuating indigenous cultures. The face of the past is vast and complex, and its study requires a sympathetic and thorough approach.

The people of the present are major stakeholders since they pay our bills, support our causes, attend our classes and lectures, and generally show the interest and enthusiasm in our profession to help perpetuate it. These are people we do not want to ignore, and I will return to them shortly.

As for the people of the future, they are inherently stakeholders because they will inherit the benefits or sufferings from our work. As social scientists, we have the ability to help engineer a world more knowledgeable and aware of its past. We believe that somehow our work will make a difference. We must find ways to guarantee that it will.

### **THE CHALLENGE FOR ARCHAEOLOGISTS AND HUMANITARIANS**

It is essential that we guarantee the social relevancy of archaeology. If we do not, we are going to have little more than a bunch of holes in the ground, and artifacts in hand. We must go further to connect the public with our work, and to move not only the excitement of archaeology closer to them, but the benefits of our study as well. There are numerous ways to do so. In fact, the SCA already has in place several vehicles for moving archaeological knowledge toward the public. Archaeology Week is a very good example of what can be done to share our work with the public. Other good examples include our Native American Programs Committee, the Education Committee, the Publicity Committee, and our association with the avocational societies. All of these committees are involved in very important work, and all of them can use our help. Remember the humanitarian implicit in the archaeologist, and get involved, whenever, however, and wherever you can. By connecting with our stakeholders, we remind both them and ourselves of our social relevancy. Perhaps it is in this connectivity that we

have the most to offer. Indeed, we are all connected through our humanity, and as anthropologists, we are intimately familiar with the many connections that exist. In other words, a profession that identifies humankind's cultural dissimilarities is in effect also identifying all that it has in common. There is much common ground for engineering a more sane and meaningful future. Concerns such as historic preservation, cultural awareness, the promotion of multi-cultural diversity, excellence in education, and the creation of a culture of peace are all areas in which we can contribute to the future health of both our species and planet, regardless of whether we consider ourselves to be anthropologists, social scientists, human scientists, human beings, archaeologists, and/or humanitarians.

In the realm of historic preservation, we have a theme most familiar to the members of our profession, and perhaps the one that most feel comfortable in pursuing. Indeed, the preservation of our world's historic and cultural heritage makes sense to archaeologists, although the rate at which our archaeological heritage is being lost in California and elsewhere makes me wonder how effective we have been. Indeed, it has been noted that, "By the middle of the twenty-first century, unless there are some fundamental changes in North American archaeology, 98 percent of all (not just currently known) archaeological deposits from before the year 2000 will have been destroyed" (Knudson 1989:71).

Like the city of Troy, we keep building upon our past, but unlike Troy, our developments often tend to replace rather than bury the past. Although many of us conduct cultural resource management as a mitigation of development's harsh realities, the destruction and loss of the resource base continues to grow, often as an indirect result of our so-called mitigation. Historic preservation needs to mean just that, the preservation of our historic heritage. Instead, when it comes to archaeological heritage, we practice a philosophy that seems to me to be more similar to conservation than preservation. Indeed, our dilemma in managing the nation's archaeological resources is not unlike that which faced people like John Muir and Gifford Pinchot when they squared off about how best to protect the nation's forests (cf. Runte 1991; Schrepfer

1983; Wild 1979). Pinchot, who argued for conservation, went on to found the U.S. Forest Service, while Muir, favoring preservation, founded the Sierra Club and helped influence the creation of the National Park Service. The argument of how best to protect the nation's forests, many of which have seen a terrific decrease in their bio-diversity, continues today, more than a century after Muir and Pinchot began the debate. While some may argue that trees are renewable resources, and thus conservation is a feasible alternative to total preservation or destruction, few will make a similar argument for archaeological resources. Indeed, archaeological resources are not renewable, they are finite and precious. And when a site is gone, no matter how well mitigated, it is gone forever. It is only through our connectivity with archaeology's stakeholders that we have a chance of changing this pattern of site destruction.

Cultural awareness and multi-cultural diversity are increasingly important factors in the well-being of our nation and global community. Unfortunately, they have not always seemed to be pressing concerns of our profession. In recent years, however, things have begun to improve, at least in terms of our profession's cultural awareness. The Native American Programs Committee is a good example of our striving to do right. But there is much more that needs to be done. And someday, the archaeological profession needs to be more reflective of our state's and nation's cultural diversity. Perhaps through the work of positive agents such as the SCA's Native American Programs, Education, and Publicity Committees, that day will come.

The pursuit of excellence in education is another area in which archaeologists can serve humanity and contribute to the well-being of our world. The SCA's Education Committee is already working toward helping California schools improve their educational programs, especially in regards to the teaching of archaeology. But there is much more that can be done. One of the most effective things we can do as archaeologists is to volunteer to present talks in our neighborhood schools. The kids love hearing about what we do. It really means something to them. Many of our archaeologists are already doing this, but there are many more who could. Let's challenge ourselves to each do

at least one schoolroom talk per year. If every SCA member did just one talk a year, we would reach over 20,000 students per year.

Finally, there is much to be gained by participating in the creation of a culture of peace. The United Nations has declared the year 2000 to be the year of the creation of a culture of peace. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization - UNESCO - will coordinate the world's efforts in this regard. Already, the SCA is involved in one UNESCO-sponsored effort to create an archaeological project that in effect promotes peaceful exchange. This is the Fort Ross - Global Village project of which many of you are aware. The benefits to the world and to each and every one of us through the creation of a culture of peace does not need explaining. The benefits are obvious. But here is one thing to consider: Nations engaged in peaceful co-existence free up massive amounts of resources and capital that can be redirected toward more humane and beneficial programs, including education and historic preservation. Just imagine what might have been accomplished if but a fraction of our nation's Cold War defense budget had been spent on archaeology.

Archaeologists and humanitarians, that's who we are, or, at least, that's who we are supposed to be, with one eye on the past, and another looking toward the future. Kids believe that archaeologists are cool, because we discover. We also need to teach and to help lead. We need to connect ourselves with humanity for our own good, and for the good of our world. We need to think and act like humanitarians, and we need to serve.

## CONCLUSIONS

That takes us back to Pam Colarich. Here's a school essay which Pam's mother sent to me shortly after Pam's death. Pam wrote it at the age of eight: "When I grow up, I'll be an archaeologist and missionary, study nature and be a scientist. When I go to the university, I will major in archaeology. I may volunteer in the Peace Corps or some social service organization. Archaeologists dig for primitive man, his dwelling and cultures."

Although only 8 years old, Pam recognized the connection between archaeology and service. If a child can see the connection, maybe it's time that we all do. Service to our profession, community, nation, and planet is an essential element of archaeology. As we stand on the brink of a new century, a new millennium, and a new era, it is time for all of us to dedicate ourselves to the humanitarian foundation of our profession, and through our service to the social idealism for which it stands, to help prepare the way for

archaeology's contribution to the future. Our work in this regard will help to insure that archaeology remains a meaningful and publicly-supported profession far into the future, and that the faces it shows the public are real faces of real people, just like you and me. Ultimately, archaeology is about real people, and the humanity which connects all of us, one to the other. Recognizing that connection will help us to create a truly "public" archaeology, and one closer to the archaeology envisioned by Pam Colarich.

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