CRM IN CALIFORNIA:

RETROSPECT ON 25 YEARS OF PROGRESS

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ABSTRACT

The progress of cultural resources management (CRM) in California is best understood with reference to broader contexts: national and regional economic conditions; environmental policy developments; legislation and case law; and evolving perspectives on archaeological goals, methods, and theory. CRM has come a long way since 1966, when salvage archaeology was practiced by bands of dedicated volunteers. The ensuing 25 years have witnessed enhanced legal protection for historic properties, emergence of large-scale CRM programs at all levels of government, dramatic growth of CRM specialization in the private sector, increased funding, and integration of resource management into processes of land-use planning and development. As a result, archaeological properties are now better managed than they were 25 years ago. Nonetheless, these gains often have been attended by loss of research focus, negligent reporting of findings, and regulatory constraints. A vital challenge is to secure the benefits of CRM without sacrificing the very raison d'être for historic preservation and for archaeology itself.

Success knows many parents, but failure is an orphan. Fortunately, the "parents" of cultural resources management (CRM) have been many. Born of a marriage between salvage archaeology and historic preservation, CRM—now into its third decade—was nurtured by environmental law, guided in its moral development by the disparate ethical codes of anthropology and business, baptized in the Church of Real Life by the ministers of Progress, schooled in the heady chaos of processualism but tested in the pragmatic domains of agency politics and Native American values, seduced by the mystique of Academe, employed as a deck hand on the Good Ship NEPA, steered always by the Advisory Council light, and destined to mature, rich in experience, and to grow ever more capable. Such is the heritage of cultural resources management.

With so many ancestors, the origins and history of CRM, even in its California persona, cannot be traced in the lineage of archaeology alone. CRM today is very much an interdisciplinary clan, uniting history and architecture, preservation law, and land management. Included also are
environmental engineering, social impact analysis, ethnography, and, of course, prehistoric and historical archaeology. An important point, therefore, is that archaeology is only one, albeit beloved, member of the CRM family. The aims of this paper—to trace the development and major trends, highlight accomplishments, and assess the status and prospects of CRM in California—are pursued from the biased perspective of an archaeologist. With apologies to my brethren in allied fields, and with great respect for their essential roles in CRM, this paper deals mainly with archaeological aspects of the topic.

A second key point is that the archaeological practice of CRM was not created in some mythic Garden of Lodi or Lompoc on the Sixth Day. Rather, with apologies now to Creation "Scientists," it evolved from venerable antecedents. Archaeology in California goes back 140 years, and it is well to remember that our predecessors laid the foundations for our own progress. Long before the emergence of CRM per se, archaeological sequences had been defined in many regions of the state (Beardsley 1948; D. Rogers 1929; M. Rogers 1945; Wallace 1955); the ubiquity of Early Man sites had been recognized (Heizer 1948); and landmark studies of diachronic change in prehistoric economic systems, often based on state-of-the-art analyses of soils and ecofacts, had been published (Cook and Heizer 1951; Cook and Treganza 1947, 1948, 1950; Gifford 1916; Greengo 1951). Extensive field surveys had produced valuable data on rock art (Heizer and Baumhoff 1962; Steward 1929), settlement patterns (Nelson 1909; Treganza et al. 1950), and architecture. Paleoecology had been studied in desert, valley, and coastal settings (Campbell et al. 1937; Warren 1964; Warren and Pavesic 1963). The Direct Historical Approach had been explored (Heizer 1941; Heizer and Mills 1952), social dimensions of early mortuary remains inferred (Gould 1963; Heizer 1949; Wallace 1951), and models of linguistic prehistory tested archaeologically (Baumhoff and Olmsted 1963; Gerow 1954). Moreover, both historic preservation and historical archaeology had been undertaken at numerous Spanish, Californio, Russian, Native American, Chinese, and Euroamerican venues (Bennyhoff and Elsasser 1954; Heizer and Fenenga 1948; Humphrey 1965; Meighan and Heizer 1952; Olsen 1961; Payen 1961; Treganza 1954a, 1958b). Hence, we today merely continue in CRM a long tradition of inquiry into, and stewardship of, California's past.

Although my own conversion from journeyman pot hunter to apprentice archaeologist took place more than 30 years ago, the review of events here begins in 1966—25 years ago. At that distant remove, which now seem at once as if it were yesterday and during the Pleistocene, I was a Senior, one of nearly 400 declared anthropology majors, at San Francisco State University. Anthropology was then very popular, with established departments (Berkeley, UCLA, U.C. Davis, and the state colleges/universities in Chico, Sacramento, Long Beach, and elsewhere) fairly bursting at the seams. In my cohort of Young Turks were Rob Edwards, George Phebus, Bob Elston, John White, Frank Rackerby, Wally Woolfenden, Tom King (yes, the Tom King), and Bob Schenk—all of
us devoted to our mentor, Adan Treganza. In the poetry of John White, Treganza was:

a dirty old man in his Volkswagen van. . . . 
The boss of the trip, the foam rubber lip, the halest recruiter around,
was Adan Treganza, the school board's romancer, the biggest damn liar in town.
The darling of students, renowned for his prudence, remembered by all for his wit... [White 1964:1].

Imbued with a contagious joie de vivre, "Trig" was also a superb teacher, irrepressible field worker, peerless salvage archaeologist, and doubtless one of the figures most responsible for laying the mudsills upon which CRM was later built (see Treganza 1953, 1954b, 1958a, 1958c, 1959, 1960, 1964a, 1964b, 1965; Treganza and Elsasser 1955; Treganza and Heiksen 1960, 1969).

While a few chosen students in the mid-1960s entered the kingdom of archaeology as retinue to their professors' grant-funded projects, the path for most was through the uncharted waste of salvage archaeology. This was often a beggar's trade, a campaign waged by zealots in the face of impossible odds. Rapid population growth and land development were devastating California's cultural sites by the score each week. Sites on private land were bereft of legal protection. The public was generally apathetic; the founding fathers of the SCA were still in couvade; and the CEQA was not yet enacted. There was no SHPO. Native Americans and archaeologists seldom communicated, much less collaborated in preservation efforts. Funding for salvage on private lands was virtually nil. Consequently, this era witnessed many encounters between rabid developers and frustrated, bulldozer-chasing volunteers hell-bent on preserving whatever they could of the archaeological record (Moratto 1973; Society for California Archaeology 1970).

Conditions were not much better in the public sector. No archaeologists graced the federal payrolls in California, save for those of the National Park Service (NPS). The NPS did pursue historic preservation "in-house," that is, within its park and monument units. Also, through its "out-house" division, NPS administered an inter-agency program of rescue archaeology under the Reservoir Salvage Act of 1960. Paul J. F. Schumacher, for many years prior to 1972, managed the NPS contract salvage program not only in California but in other western states to boot! Approximately 200 federal employees are now responsible for cultural resources on the lands once administered by Schumacher.

Under NPS aegis, archaeological surveys were launched from Mt. McKinley to Baja California. Test and salvage excavations proliferated in diverse setting: Point Reyes (Schenk 1970), Whiskeytown (Treganza and Heiksen 1960), Dry Creek (Treganza
1964b), Thomes Creek (Edwards 1969), Monterey (Pritchard 1968), Death Valley and Joshua Tree National Monuments (Wallace 1958, 1964), and at Paskenta-Newville (Chartkoff and Childress 1966), Buchanan (King 1976; Moratto 1972), Hidden (Penenga 1973; Kelly 1974), and New Melones (Moratto 1976; Payen et al. 1969) reservoirs, to name a few. Nonetheless, the Panzer divisions of Progress relentlessly dozed, ripped, paved, and flooded archaeological sites, overwhelming the defenses of the NPS salvage program. Interstate Highway 5 and the California Aqueduct, as examples, were built without archaeological ceremony. Given the magnitude of such impacts, federal support for salvage archaeology in California prior to ca. 1975 can be likened to a rowboat on a tsunami.

Apart from university programs, such as the Archaeological Surveys at Berkeley and Los Angeles, cultural-resource work by the State was, until the early 1970s, comparable in scope to that of the federal government in California. Sites in State Park units were managed if identified, but those elsewhere on State lands usually traveled incognito. Most State agencies paid no attention to archaeology. During those years, the State Archaeologist, Fritz Riddell—aided by Bill Olsen, Sam Payen, Norm Wilson, Bill Pritchard, and others in the Department of Parks and Recreation—did yeoman's service to rescue data from Whale Rock Reservoir, Chilcoot Rockshelter, the Rio Oso site, the Oroville Project, Los Baños Detention Dam, and Perris, Little Panoche, and San Luis reservoirs (O'Connell et al. 1974; Olsen and Payen 1968; Olsen and Riddell 1962, 1963; Payen and Boloyan 1961; Pritchard 1970; Reinman 1961).

Improved treatment of archaeological remains, coinciding with the birth of CRM, came about as a result of new laws. The first, and perhaps most important, was the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which enhanced the National Register of Historic Places, established the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and, in Section 106, required federal agencies to consider the effects of their undertakings on historic properties, including archaeological sites.

This Act was followed in rapid succession by others: the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, requiring federal agencies to foster environmental quality and preservation, and, in Section 101(b)(4), declaring that one objective of the national environmental policy is to "preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage..."; the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, a landmark state law cast in NEPA's mold; Executive Order No. 11593, Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment, 1971, in which President Nixon called upon federal agencies to play a leading role in preserving, restoring, and maintaining America's historic and cultural environment, and required those agencies to locate, inventory, evaluate, and properly manage cultural resources under their jurisdiction; the Historic and Archaeological Data Preservation Act of 1974, which authorized federal agencies to
use a portion of their construction project funds to pay for the recovery, protection, and preservation of jeopardized resources and data; and, finally, the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, which remedied deficiencies in the Antiquities Act of 1906, required a permit for any excavation or removal of archaeological resources from federal or Indian lands, and provided both civil and criminal penalties for violation.

With each enactment, the pace and complexity of archaeological work increased. Swarms of regulations were hatched to help effect the new laws. In the early 1970s,

the (mostly-academic) archaeological establishment found itself unable to keep pace with the boom in survey and excavation projects. To meet demand, archaeology in the private sector grew explosively. Neither private firms nor universities, however, could muster enough trained and experienced archaeologists, and the quality of work frequently suffered [Moratto 1981:1].

At the same time, the Forest Service, BLM, Corps of Engineers, and other federal agencies were building CRM programs and drawing heavily from the depleted labor pool. As projects of unprecedented size and scope were mobilized, some agencies neglected their CRM responsibilities; some archaeologists proved ineffective as managers; and, in a few cases, inept contractors abused cultural resources and squandered funds (General Accounting Office 1981). In the contemporary words of Tom King, "California's means of coping with archaeology in the 1970s can most hopefully be described as creative anarchy" (King 1973:33).

Star date 1973: The Enterprise of California archaeology, with Spock and Kirk stranded on Vulcan, was flashing into the void at warp speed!

How CRM survived all of this will be the focus of my remaining comments. First, though, it is worth emphasis that the legal footings of CRM were emplaced by widespread public concern about environmental issues generally, rather than archaeological preservation specifically. We must bear in mind that archaeology is not viewed by society as a vital commodity. It is not like food, shelter, sex, or Ferraris. There is no inherent, natural market for our product. We depend on public knowledge and good will, which, in turn, must be cultivated through both popular media and formal education. As Fritz and Plog (1970:412) recognized 21 years ago, "unless archaeologists find ways to make their research increasingly relevant to the modern work, the modern world will find itself increasingly capable of getting along without archaeologists."

Now, to examine salient trends in CRM during the past 25 years. The first and most fundamental of these has already been traced: the steady accumulation of laws and regulations governing cultural resources. Indeed, the legal mandate for
historic preservation is now stronger in many respects than that for any other environmental domain.

A second trend has been the dramatic growth of an infrastructure to manage cultural resources. Hundreds of archaeologists, together with growing numbers of historians and ethnographers, are now employed by the Forest Service, NPS, BLM, BuRec, CoE, Navy, and Air Force in California. Virtually none of their positions existed in 1966. State agencies, too—particularly Caltrans, CDP, Water Resources, and DPR (including OHP)—have recruited a phalanx of historic-preservation specialists during the past two decades. This growth was never accomplished easily. Anxious program directors watched budgetary storms deliver much-needed cashfall in some years, followed by periods of drought and withering staff. The mesic/xeric funding cycles struck CRM programs in series: the Park Service was well funded during the late 1960s, followed in turn by the USFS and BLM, then the DOD. Now it would appear that both federal and state budgetary climates are entering a Neo-Altithermal.

Before moving on, let us acknowledge some of those who have labored long and productively in government to build essential parts of the CRM structure. We are all much indebted to the pioneering efforts of Roger Cook (Caltrans), Garland Gordon and Roger Kelly (NPS), Patti Johnson and Pat Martz (CoE), Knox Mellon (OHP), Don Miller (USFS), Bill Olsen (BLM), Fritz Riddell (DPR), Jim West (BuRec), and so many others.

Beyond government, the CRM infrastructure includes the academic and private sectors. The latter, which currently employs more CRM specialists in California than do government and academia combined, had not even twinkled the archaeological eye in 1966. California's first CRM firm, Archaeological Research, Incorporated (ARI), was founded by Roger Desautels in 1968 (Paul Chace, personal communication 1991). Since then, the rise of private-sector archaeology has been meteoric. Scores of companies, typically Mom 'n' Pop shops, arose during the early 1970s in response to CEQA requirements for Environmental Impact Reports (EIRs). Gradually, as federal agencies began to contract for similar environmental studies, the companies expanded their services into the novel realms of Section 106 and NEPA compliance.

Although even soft numbers are hard to come by, the count of CRM outfits in California apparently peaked at 150-200 during the late 1970s, plummeted during the decade of Reaganomical dementia, and now is fairly stable at about 40-50. Some of the better known of these are BioSystems Analysis, Inc., Chambers Group, Inc., Cultural Systems Research, Inc., Dames & Moore, EBASCO, Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Greenwood and Associates, INFOTEC Research, Inc., Peak & Associates, Inc., Statistical Research, and Woodward-Clyde Consultants. Among the numerous archaeological studies completed by such private firms are those related to the Elkhorn Slough (Dietz et al. 1988), Fort Irwin (Jenkins 1986; Kelly and Warren 1984; Robarchek et al. 1984;
More significant than their numbers, private CRM companies are becoming substantially larger, better managed, and more varied in their technical offerings than were their antecedents. Top CRM firms are now viewed as prime takeover targets of larger engineering and environmental companies hankering for full-service capability. In terms of professional staff and well-equipped facilities, these firms set the standards. Several of the CRM companies in California have contract programs funded at levels greater than the National Science Foundation's annual budget for archaeological projects world-wide. Clearly, private-sector archaeology has come a long way since the 1960s, when a VW van full of tents, shovels, pasta, and wine would suffice.

Our academic brethren, too, have contributed mightily to CRM. Despite vicissitudes of public support, funding, and enrollments, the archaeological torch has been held high. A successful blend of instructional and contract programs (e.g., at UCLA, Davis, Santa Barbara, Riverside, Chico, Sacramento, Bakersfield, San Jose, Northridge, and East Lansing) has yielded good crops of budding professionals as well as some superb public archaeology. Especially notable in this regard is Sonoma State University, where—thanks to the vision, patience, and acute scholarship of David Fredrickson—one of the finest CRM programs in America has flourished for two decades.

Not to be overlooked are the community colleges—Merced, Cabrillo, Fresno City, Santa Rosa J.C., Shasta College, and numerous others—whose faculty and students have labored productively in the fields of CRM. Credit goes to the universities and colleges for archaeological investigations at Vandenberg AFB (Glassow 1981; Serena 1981), Point Reyes (Schenk 1970), the King Range (Levulett 1985; Levulett and Hildebrandt 1987), numerous California missions (Hoover and Costello 1985), Fort Ross (see Parris 1989), Warm Springs (Baumhoff and Orlins 1979), French Camp Slough (Jerald Johnson, personal communication 1971), Black Butte Lake (Johnson et al. 1984), Cottonwood Creek (Dondero et al. 1984), and New Melones Reservoir (Moratto 1976), along the Santa Barbara Channel (Glassow 1980; Glassow et al. 1988), and in countless other locations throughout the state.
In addition to legal and structural trends in CRM, two other developments are remarkable. The first relates to the actual treatment of cultural resources. Because resource management is now well integrated into the process of land-use planning, archaeological resources fare much better than they did 25 years ago. Those who worked in CRM through these years will appreciate both the magnitude of change and the significance of the achievement. Archaeological properties are now inventoried and evaluated systematically, potential effects upon them assessed, and avoidance or optimal treatment prescribed. Thereby, our generation conserves for posterity much of the cultural record, a sine qua non for future archaeology in California.

The other development to which I alluded is increasing professionalism. The treatment of workers, as well as the quality of their work, has improved greatly since the 1960s. It was not unknown then for students venturing into the Barbary Coast of archaeology to be indentured to salvage projects, where they worked 12-hour days under the blazing sun, sucked air through dust so thick that the Cocci spores had no room to wiggle, endured food-like meals concocted by the director's spouse, drank tepid Kool Aid brewed in a 55-gallon diesel oil drum, slept on the ground in all kinds of weather, and closed the season both impoverished and malnourished, but somehow, masochistically, yearning for more of the same.

Although many of us still enjoy 80-hour work weeks, finding precious little time for life itself, overall circumstances of employment in CRM have improved steadily. The field now offers stable, long-term career tracks with competitive salaries and benefits. CRM specialists now perceive of themselves as professional scholars/managers akin to, say, engineers or research attorneys. Except as anachronisms in remote pockets, the era of "digro" labor and "you'll-get-paid-if-we-get-paid" archaeology has vanished from the California scene. ¡Ojalá!

Many other accomplishments of CRM could be discussed. Time permits brief mention of only one, although this topic could easily be the subject of a book: CRM's contribution to archaeological method and theory, to culture history, to paleoecology, and otherwise to the advancement of knowledge. Models of prehistoric land use and settlement have been substantially revised as a result of intensive cultural-resource surveys in environmental settings overlooked by previous researchers. Refined sampling procedures and many innovative techniques for rapid, efficient recovery of data have been perfected in CRM contexts. Our knowledge of lithic technology, variables affecting obsidian hydration, lithic resource procurement, and obsidian exchange systems has been enhanced greatly as a product of CRM activities. These are but examples of CRM's full partnership in the scholarly endeavor of archaeology (see also the paper by Chartkoff, this volume).

To conclude, the past 25 years have witnessed greatly
enhanced legal protection for historic properties, emergence of large-scale CRM programs at all levels of government, dramatic growth of CRM specialization in the private sector, increased funding, and integration of resource-management procedures into land-use planning and development. As a result, archaeological resources are now better managed than they were 25 years ago. Nonetheless, these gains sometimes have been attended by such problems as loss of research focus, negligent reporting of work and findings, regulatory constraints, and proliferation of substandard work. A vital challenge is to secure the benefits of CRM without sacrificing the very raison d'être for historic preservation and for archaeology itself.

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