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NEW ZEALAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER



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THE CONSERVATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES IN HAWAII

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Hawaiian archaeologists are fortunate among men. They are the first generation of archaeologists to explore the mysteries of Hawaii's ancient past. Every survey, every excavation ventures into terra incognita. Fortunate, indeed, for they are also the last generation of archaeologists who will ever have the opportunity to see such a wide range of sites in such pristine condition. They are the only generation of archaeologists who will have the opportunity to say something about the preservation of large areas with lots of different kinds of sites. If they would only stand up and say it.

The Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum was founded in 1889, before Hawaii became a territory of the United States. The museum's Department of Anthropology developed a comprehensive archaeology programme that included site surveys, excavations, curation of ethnographic and archaeological materials, scientific publications and museum displays. The museum is a local tradition and is still considered to be synonymous with archaeology in Hawaii by most people. The museum's programme, however, has never included the acquisition of archaeological sites for preservation and public use. And the museum has not developed a rescue archaeology programme (as opposed to a contract archaeology programme) for the purpose of conducting emergency studies at sites in the process of being destroyed.

The University of Hawaii's Department of Anthropology also has an archaeology programme, which has focused on education (BA, MA, PhD), research and scientific publications. The university has sponsored a number of landmark studies in Hawaiian archaeology. However, its involvement in the development of laboratory facilities, curation, public archaeology, site preservation, local politics and contract archaeology has always been limited.

The State's archaeological programme began in 1967, in response to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA). This law established the National Register of Historic Places, state review boards to evaluate site nominations, state historic preservation offices responsible for administering the programme in the states, a mechanism for providing funds for survey and planning, acquisition and development, a federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to oversee the programme, and a Section 106 review process that directs federal agencies to consult the Advisory Council on matters affecting sites on the National Register. It also directed federal

agencies to take steps to avoid the inadvertent destruction of potential National Register sites before they were properly identified and nominated. Amendments to the NHPA, in 1980, further directed federal agencies to survey their lands for historic sites.

Hawaii's 1967 law was passed to allow for participation in the federal programme, which provided for 50% federal funding. The main political force behind the legislation both nationally and in Hawaii came from non-archaeological sources. The people interested in preserving old buildings as representative of the achievements of our remarkable American culture and heritage. The current State historic preservation programme in Hawaii is based on legislation passed in 1976, H.R.S. Chapter 6E, which established the framework for a comprehensive programme of site preservation and protection on both public and private lands, as well as the mechanisms for participation in the federal programme. Hawaii's state law is one of the best in the United States. It provides for the review of most development projects on state and private lands, in addition to establishing a state programme to record, study, protect, acquire, develop and write about historic and archaeological sites. Hawaii's programme is administered by, and buried within, the Department of Land and Natural Resources, Division of State Parks, Historic Sites Section. The staff of the Historic Sites Section, which implements H.R.S. Chapter 6E, is also the staff of the State Historic Preservation Office, which implements the NHPA at the local level.

Almost all of the archaeological work being done in Hawaii today is surveys and excavations that come under the rubric of contract archaeology. It might also be called conservation archaeology, rescue archaeology, public archaeology, salvage archaeology, profit-motivated archaeology, or pseudo-archaeology, but it is almost never called good archaeology. In general, archaeologists are not happy with the current state of affairs.

Ross Cordy, one of ten archaeologists who have written PhD dissertations based on research in Hawaii during the period 1946 to 1982, recently identified a number of serious problems (i.e. chaos) in Hawaiian archaeology (Cordy, 1982; my rephrasing of Cordy's list of problems):

1. the perception of site significance;
2. limited funding;
3. limited legal protection from destruction;
4. bad archaeology; and
5. the government bureaucracy.

Cordy's solutions, which did not directly address all of his identified problem areas, were as follows:

1. recognise the exhibition potential of sites as well as the research potential;
2. conduct surveys of all lands to develop a state-wide preservation plan, not just surveys in areas in the process of being developed;
3. prepare a comprehensive historic preservation plan that provides guidelines for contract research;
4. publish research results in a popular format; and
5. government programmes and contract research should be run by professional archaeologists with PhDs.

The last is Cordy's main point, and main solution. Most important of all, doctorates should be in positions of responsibility and authority. Such a solution is nothing more than an extension into the field of conservation archaeology of the archaeological profession's traditional belief that scholars at the doctoral level are the best prepared to do competent archaeological fieldwork; by extrapolation, they have a better perception of site significance, the politics of government bureaucracies, how to influence legislatures to increase funding and improve the laws, and how to get the most out of development-sponsored archaeological research.

As if PhDs have not been doing poor contract archaeology in Hawaii; as if PhDs have been active in lobbying the government and the legislature to improve the situation; as if PhDs have been active in working with community leaders and volunteer organisations to protect Hawaiian sites; as if PhDs have been active in publishing the results of recent archaeological research in Hawaii; as if PhDs have not worked in the State's historic preservation programme and abandoned it when the going got tough. If Hawaiian archaeology is in trouble, and it is, those most qualified to understand the problems and do something about it, those with doctorates, who have been good at grumbling but ineffective otherwise, should be credited with most of the blame.

Traditional scientific research is not the problem. The Bishop Museum and the University of Hawaii continue to be involved in research projects of admirable quality, such as the museum's recent research project in Anahulu Valley, O'ahu, and the university's dissertation research project at Mauna Kea, Hawaii. The problems revolve around contract archaeology and the government's management of the State's historic preservation programme.

The State Historic Preservation Office

The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has four archaeologists to carry out the programme's legislated mandates which include:

1. maintaining an inventory of archaeological sites;
2. conducting emergency excavations;
3. providing public education;
4. producing scientific publications;
5. buying significant sites, restoring and developing sites;
6. nominating sites to the State and National Registers of Historic Places;
7. writing the State's historic preservation plan;
8. providing the public and government agencies with archaeological expertise and guidance;
9. writing an annual report;
10. establishing rules and regulations for the preservation and protection of archaeological sites; and
11. reviewing proposed developments with regard to their impact on archaeological sites.

Reviews include the review of environmental impact statements (EIS), conservation district use applications (CDUA), shore management area permit applications (SMA), county special use permit applications, federal grant applications and permits, federal development projects, state land-use requests (SLD), and petitions to amend the boundaries of State land use districts. The workload is excessive, and the priorities established by the state administrators, who are not archaeologists, are poor.

The failure of the SHPO to carry out its legislated duties plays a prominent role in the failure of contract archaeology in Hawaii:

1. The statewide inventory of archaeological sites has been ignored for ten years.
2. Emergency excavations are not being conducted as needed.
3. Programme information is not being actively disseminated to the public.
4. The publications programme begun in 1968 was discontinued in 1971.
5. Significant sites are not being acquired, restored or developed.
6. Too few archaeological sites are being nominated to the state and national registers.
7. The state's historic preservation plan is a disappointing imitation of a legitimate plan.
8. No staff time is devoted to working with the public and government agencies on resolving chronic programme problems.
9. The annual reports have declined in quality.
10. Rules and regulations have not been established.
11. Reviews of development projects are almost always superficial and inadequate.

This is the environment in which archaeologists have been conducting contract archaeology.

The statewide inventory of archaeological sites

The SHPO contains hundreds of draft site forms resulting from field surveys conducted in the early seventies that have never been incorporated into the statewide inventory, or nominated to the state and national registers. New data comes in every year, in the form of reports on surveys in development areas, but nothing is done with it. Contract archaeologists do not routinely record site data on official site forms. Neither does the state, on those rare occasions that the staff archaeologists have ventured into the field to look at areas with previously unrecorded sites. Neither do interested members of the public. The state needs to have at least four archaeologists working full time on the inventory, working to record sites on all islands, from all categories of land use and ownership, and spending about four months a year in the field. And a fifth archaeologist is needed to oversee the survey programme and maintain the central site files. Currently, one archaeologist works part-time on the inventory.

Rescue archaeology

The state does not have a programme to conduct emergency excavations as needed. The problem is particularly acute with regard to ancient Hawaiian graves that are continually being destroyed at construction sites, eroding coastal areas, and vandalised burial caves. Archaeologists believe it is the state's responsibility to respond to these crises, and they seldom volunteer their time. Nor do archaeologists, whether in the contract business, at the museum or at the university, have the time to spare from their already overloaded work schedules to work on burial excavations, which, when followed up by proper laboratory study, curation, and report preparation, can be quite time consuming. The state needs to have two archaeologists located in each county to handle emergency excavations. Currently it has none.

Public education

About ten years ago, a pamphlet was prepared to explain the state's historic preservation programme. It was never printed, yet the SHPO gets frequent requests for such information. There still is no printed source explaining the state's historic preservation laws, policies, problems, plans and accomplishments; nothing that discusses site significance or the importance of Hawaii's ancient ruins and its historic preservation programme, nothing to promote the programme with the public, developers, planners and government agencies.

Report publication

Scientific reports published by the SHPO in the early years have gone out-of-print, and have not been reprinted despite numerous requests for them. The results of current research projects in developing State Parks are not being published. Even worse, the state has refused to release copies of an archaeological report on sites in North Kohala, because it doesn't want the public to know the author's recommendations for site preservation.

Site acquisition and development

Very few Hawaiian sites are being acquired and developed for use by the community and visitors. Even though the state programme has been in existence for 18 years now, there is no place on Kaua'i, O'ahu, Mokoko'i, Lana'i or Maui where school children, Hawaiians, archaeologists or tourists can go to a public park to see an ancient Hawaiian ko'a (fishing shrine), a hale (house site), an agricultural terrace, a complete lo'i system (a cluster of ponded taro patches), an ahupua'a marker (a rock cairn or wall marking the boundary between traditional land divisions), a trail, or a burial platform. In no case has any impending private development or public works project been a factor in the acquisition of significant archaeological sites by the state to save the sites from destruction. A good indication of the state's commitment to acquisition and development of important historical sites is the fact that in 1982 the SHPO allowed \$1,463,000 to lapse without spending them, funds that had been appropriated by the legislature for acquisition and development projects.

Nominations to the registers

Since 1975, the federal government has nominated three Hawaiian sites to the National Register of Historic Places; the state government has nominated two. Add to that the 23 nominations sponsored by two private developers and the result is that 28 Hawaiian sites have been added to the National Register of Historic Places in nine years.

Between 1975 and 1984 the State Historic Preservation Office failed to nominate even one Hawaiian site to the Hawaii Register of Historic Places. None of the sites nominated by the state are in areas likely to be impacted by construction.

At the present time, the National Register of Historic Places lists far less than one percent of the known prehistoric Hawaiian sites in the state. Kaua'i has two sites on

the National Register; Lana'i, one site; Moloka'i, 24; Maui, three; O'ahu, 27; and Hawai'i, 22 sites. (The entire island of Kaho'olawe is on the National Register). Known sites of exceptional quality have not been nominated to the National Register, such as the Barbers Point Harbor Archaeological District and the coastal sites of Lana'i. Most other states average twenty nominations a year.

State historic preservation plan

As directed by federal regulations, each state is supposed to prepare and implement a comprehensive state historic preservation plan, that provides an overview of historic and archaeological resources and the cultural resources management process. The plan is supposed to contain a detailed discussion and critical synthesis of existing knowledge about archaeological resources and preservation goals, so that effective and efficient decisions and recommendations can be made regarding the need for surveys, how to evaluate site significance, the need for preservation, or the need for mitigation.

Hawaii's plan is called a 'functional plan', and is intended to guide long range development and allocation of funds. It follows a format prescribed by bureaucrats and urban planners that is not well suited to the needs of a plan to guide the preservation and protection of archaeological resources. It contains neither an overview of Hawaiian archaeology nor guidelines for cultural resources management. It does not satisfactorily consider the problems of conservation archaeology in Hawaii; and it offers no reasonable solutions.

Co-ordination and guidance

Complying with state and federal historic preservation laws can be difficult, because of the widely variable understanding people have of the laws and regulations. It is the SHPO's job to provide guidance and leadership. It has not. Annual workshops for archaeological consultants, businessmen, planners and government workers should be held to explain the laws and the historic preservation process, to explain options and policies, to pass on information received from the National Register and the Advisory Council, to discuss report recommendations and standards for archaeological fieldwork, and to resolve problems.

Annual report

The last comprehensive and satisfactory volume of the annual historic preservation report was printed in 1977. A good annual report is one of the most important elements in a successful historic preservation programme, a report that pauses to reflect and evaluate, a report that provides the public with current information about important Hawaiian sites and projects, a report that teaches, a report that generates support, a report that creates harmony and understanding.

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Regulations

Regulations providing standards and procedures for implementing the historic preservation programme law have never been established. Meanwhile, planners, developers, construction crews, engineers, architects, state and county workers, the news media, archaeologists and community groups muddle along using false and divergent assumptions, interpretations, standards and procedures. With the absence of an established state plan and guide-lines, all SHPO reviews and recommendations remain flexible, arbitrary, subjective, unpredictable and unfair.

Reviews

Development continues to destroy significant archaeological sites with little government resistance, more often, indeed, with the bureaucracy's assistance. The SHPO did nothing to support the concerns of archaeologists when the Corps of Engineers recently accepted an inadequate report on the salvage excavations for the Barbers Point Harbor project. The Barbers Point cave deposits were priceless, containing the bones of extinct, endemic species of Hawaiian birds and human bones too. The caves in the project area were destroyed with almost no study. What is left pales in comparison to what was lost. Development and destruction continues around Barbers Point, and the SHPO has not taken actions to ensure the preservation of the remaining sites in the area.

The SHPO's review of the construction of the new Halekulani Hotel in Waikiki failed to provide for sufficient study of significant archaeological deposits, including ancient Hawaiian graves, even though the developer had made a commitment to conduct salvage excavations in the EIS for the project. Salvage excavations by the Bishop Museum, begun six months after construction had started at the site, came to a halt prematurely because of unresolved conflicts with the Halekulani's management. The SHPO did nothing to support the Bishop Museum, or to further archaeological study of the site.

The SHPO is responsible for reviewing hundreds of proposed development projects for their impact on archaeological sites every year. These reviews are almost always short, superficial, generalised beyond relevancy, vague, incomplete and inadequate. They do not take into account the results of recent research in Hawaiian archaeology. They do not reflect the attitudes and opinions of Hawaii's archaeologists. They are not based on a thorough knowledge and understanding of current developments in the field of archaeology.

Professional archaeologists in the SHPO are not given the time necessary to do proper reviews of development proposals, recommendations for archaeological mitigation, or contract archaeology reports. They are not given the opportunity to engage in professional activities such as scientific conferences and teaching college courses on cultural resources management. They are not supported in their efforts to receive additional training or continue with their education.

Hawaiian perspectives

The native Hawaiian perspective on Hawaiian archaeology is dominated by over-riding cultural patterns and social issues. Archaeological sites are not a prominent community concern. Prejudice, poverty, social disorganisation and cultural disintegration - these are the real issues and the context in which Hawaiian behaviour towards archaeology can be examined and understood. (I refer to these social problems in their proper context as part of overall American society; tradition-Hawaiian society disintegrated well over a century ago.)

There are as many perspectives as there are 'native Hawaiians', a term impossible to define, because of amorphous ethnic and racial boundaries in Hawaii. It is misleading in discussions about local community attitudes on archaeology. (Except that everyone uses the term all the time so that, like 'the integrity of government leaders', it exists).

Some Hawaiians believe that ancient Hawaiian ruins and artefacts belong to them and not to the community or to the land owner. Archaeologists often participate in such confrontations as outsiders, as if Hawaiians and archaeologists were mutually exclusive groups, not as equal members of a community that contains people who are both Hawaiians and archaeologists; not as equal members of an island community, with ties to each other and the past, and with a commitment to co-operation and the future.

Generalisations may not be the whole truth but they help to guide our daily behaviour and Hawaiian perspectives on archaeology. Hawaiians want to visit archaeological sites, though many have never visited the Hawaiian ruins at some of our State Parks. Hawaiians like to collect artefacts such as polished stone adzes and shell fishhooks, but most don't have artefact collections.

A group of Hawaiian political activists, known as the Protect Kaho'olawe Ohana, began to battle the U.S. Navy in 1976 for control of the island of Kaho'olawe. The struggles of the PKO, both in and out of court, have achieved widespread publicity and have been a major factor in focussing community attention on ancient Hawaiian sites and their importance. The PKO is also responsible for prodding the Navy to undertake a comprehensive archaeological survey of the entire island of Kaho'olawe; it is responsible for gaining civilian access to visit the island's fantastic archaeological sites.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs, a newly created branch of the state government, recently funded a study and evaluation of the state's historic preservation programme when the SHPO declined to do the study which had been asked for by the legislature. These examples are an indication of the strong support Hawaiians have given the state's historic preservation programme.

Archaeologists

The Society for Hawaiian Archaeology was formed by a group of concerned archaeologists in 1980. The Society made a movie in 1982 called: Hawaii's Endangered Past - A Matter of Time. The movie was a documentary of interviews with archaeologists, Hawaiians and developers, which seemed to say that sites are important and we have laws to protect them from development and the system seems to be working. The movie was an absurd embarrassment to archaeologists who believe Hawaiian archaeology is in trouble.

In 1983, legislation was proposed to establish a Department of Antiquities and to get the state archaeology programme out of the Department of Land and Natural Resources. The Society for Hawaiian Archaeology testified against the proposal.

In 1984, a Honolulu television station produced a five day news documentary on the problems of archaeology in Hawaii that was critical of the state's historic preservation programme and bad contract archaeology. The news special drew no public

response. The SHPO didn't call; Hawaiians didn't call. Archaeologists didn't call. Nobody called.

In 1983, the author wrote an article in the Society for American Archaeology's COPA Communications (Committee on Public Archaeology) on the need for letters of public support attesting to the significance and archaeological importance of the bird bone deposits in the Barbers Point Harbor area. The appeal resulted in one letter nationwide, and two from Hawaii.

Requiem

Hawaiian archaeology in the Twentieth Century: Lack of leadership. Lack of commitment. Lack of knowledge. Lack of understanding. Lack of courage. The opportunities for discovery were squandered. The privilege to make a difference was lost. Along with the sites.

Reference

- Cordy, R. 1982 The dangers of historic preservation and contract archaeology. N.Z.A.A. Newsletter, 25:277-290.