



**Paul Fagette.** *Digging for Dollars: American Archaeology and the New Deal.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1996. xxvii + 228 pp. \$40.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-8263-1721-6.



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**Published on** H-PCAACA (November, 1996)

This 255-page volume contributes substantially to our understanding of economic relief in the form of employment during the Great Depression of the 1930s and the parallel need to conduct professional archaeological research. Fagette characterizes federal and state government New Deal projects and American archaeological field research, artifact analysis, and publication in this revision of his dissertation in history (University of California, Riverside, 1985). The volume includes an introduction, prologue, five chapters, epilogue, two appendices, 38 pages of endnotes, 390 references, a ten-page index, 16 halftones, and one map. The author, currently an assistant professor of history at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, reviews nineteenth and twentieth-century scientific institutions, details precursors to the New Deal, considers the interrelationships of archaeology to the federal government and academia, and then characterizes the practice of state archaeology across a spectrum of state and federal relief programs. The focus is nearly exclusively on personalities, politics, and major relief efforts in the southeastern United States where there were few major museums or large anthro-

pology departments to provide appropriate research infrastructures.

Using primary archival and secondary source materials and oral history interviews with major archaeologists from this era, he demonstrates how the profession of archaeology was both nurtured and impeded because of federal funding and reporting requirements. The changing roles of the Smithsonian Institution and the National Park Service (NPS) during the 1930s and elucidates the creation of the Society for American Archaeology are documented. Fagette contends that relief work during the 1930s had the dual function of data acquisition and public relations--attesting to the importance of archaeology for the retrieval of unique information and to popularize the profession by exposing "countless thousands" to archaeology. Although the relief effort emphasized the employment of unskilled laborers, skilled workers including anthropologists, artists, and engineers, among others, were employed in archaeological research. The decade was critical in the development of modern archaeology and how research is conducted today.

Fagette discusses the "alphabet soup" of the era--the Civil Works Administration (CWA) which carried out Smithsonian excavations and TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority) reservoir salvage archaeology projects fieldwork, which marked a "new age" in American archaeology. He proposes that, beginning with the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) in 1934-1935, the power of the Smithsonian declined while university, museum, and state agencies' authority was enhanced. Research under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) of 1935-1942 (renamed Works Projects Administration in 1939) is also related. The author notes that by 1939 the number of academically-trained archaeologists had increased dramatically, data reporting was more standardized, employment opportunities were enhanced, and archaeologists realized that they needed to influence federal bureaucracies (p. 94). Fagette observes that "women in New Deal archaeology were conspicuous by their absence" (p. 113), but reports the use of black and women laborers. The importance of WPA archaeological consultant Vincenzo Petruccio, the Society for Georgia Archaeology, the State Surveys Committee, the Midwestern Taxonomic System, and increased methodological and political sophistication are discussed. Two appendices (which could have been integrated into the narrative) document FERA and characterize briefly--but superficially--relief archaeology in non-southeastern states. A number of misspellings and errors occur in the endnote citations.

Readers should also consult a comprehensive study written by Edwin Lyon, a Ph.D. historian who also holds degrees in anthropological archaeology. Lyon, a historian with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, and adjunct professor of geography and anthropology at Louisiana State University, authored *A New Deal for Southeastern Archaeology* (University of Alabama Press, 1996). The book, a revision of his 1982 LSU dissertation in history, is more focussed than Fagette's work, reviews the WPA on a state-by-state basis, and provides much more detail on the

archaeological sites and personnel data on TVA and NPS archaeologists.

Unfortunately, both Fagette and Lyon emphasize the history of southeastern American archaeology and rarely mention the significant research conducted in other geographic regions of the United States. Although the southeast was a focus of a majority of research conducted during the 1930s, this reviewer can personally attest to the importance of New Deal archaeology in the northeastern United States. The two authors cover the same basic topics using different formats and occasionally reach divergent conclusions from the same archival documents.

Nonetheless, Fagette's book is an important contribution to the histories of archaeology, the social sciences, and the humanities, and to the literature on American popular culture. However, in my estimation, Lyon has a better grasp of archaeological terminology and the history of the discipline, and provides a cogent format and cohesive narrative. However, only the surface of this topic has been considered in both of these treatises and the subject remains a fruitful area for additional introspective archival research.

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**Citation:** Charles C. Kolb. Review of Fagette, Paul. *Digging for Dollars: American Archaeology and the New Deal*. H-PCAACA, H-Net Reviews. November, 1996.

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