

PREFACE

Ancient North America enters its fourth edition with the same goal as before: to provide a narrative account of what is known of the diverse ancient societies of North America, from first settlement before 12,000 BC up to European contact and beyond. The story is based on a complex archaeological record chronicled in print and, increasingly, in cyberspace, also on years of field and museum visits, attending conferences, and discussions with archaeologists working in every corner of North America. Increasingly, too, feedback from instructors, students, and the general public helps shape the volume in its evolving iterations. Some brief remarks about the nature of the book and the changes in the fourth edition are appropriate.

GENERAL COMMENTS

I assume that the reader has some basic knowledge of the fundamental principles and terminology of archaeology, obtained in a college or university course, or through avocational or practical experience. Readers anxious to acquire knowledge of the basics of archaeological method and theory are referred to widely available textbooks on the subject. I have done all I can to write this book in such a way as to keep terminological labels and other technicalities to a minimum, but some intricacies are inevitable in a highly technical subject like this one.

The text is referenced, but only sufficiently so to allow the reader to delve more deeply into the technical literature when desired. Annotated “Further Reading” lists appear at the end of each chapter for initial guidance. Invariably, the sources in these lists contain comprehensive bibliographies. As a general principle, I have tended to cite key papers, reports, and syntheses that provide comprehensive citations for more detailed research.

Ancient North America covers over 15 millennia of the past, so it is an inescapable compromise between the harsh dictates of space and the need to be comprehensive. There are many places where I have had to compress local and regional data in the interests of brevity and clarity. Inevitably, I have overgeneralized and oversimplified in places, as I try to balance accuracy with economy. If you probe more specialized references, you will soon encounter the real complexities of what is, at times, a frustrating and complex literature.

North American archaeology is an increasingly specialized subject, the more so with the advent of multidisciplinary research and Cultural Resource Management. This reality has made it hard to keep one’s eyes focused on the larger picture, which is, after all, the purview of this book. Archaeology, by its very nature, is a local subject with many narrow concerns and local culture-historical problems. However, I have omitted many local cultural terms, summarizing them occasionally for reference, but trying to keep them to a minimum in the narrative. The many detailed regional syntheses cited in these pages will fill in local detail.

Generations of North American archaeologists have grappled with the complex theoretical problems of both describing and explaining the past. The debates over theory continue unabated, which is healthy, but they confirm the wisdom of not encasing this book within a rigid theoretical doctrine. Part One gives a summary account of some of the major theoretical developments in North American archaeology. We also introduce many more specific controversies and theoretical insights at appropriate moments in later chapters. In this way, I balance narrative description with explanation, the broad sweep of the past with more descriptive concerns. I also strongly believe that ancient North America must be interpreted in terms not only of the global human past, but also in the context of later world history. For this reason, the closing chapter of the book examines the archaeology of post-contact North America and covers some of the devastating cultural changes that overtook native American societies after European exploration and settlement.

SOURCES

Anyone who writes a book like this faces an enormous and never-ending flood of articles, books, and reports. Just navigating the proliferating academic literature is hard enough, but the problem of sources has been compounded in recent years by the emergence of Cultural Resource Management (CRM) as the major factor in North American archaeology and also by the increasing use of the World Wide Web. To avoid complete intellectual indigestion, I have followed some rules in Ancient North America, which reflect the reality of archaeology in the public arena:

- This book is written from published sources only. No unpublished data appears in this book, unless I have the written permission of the researcher, in which case it is cited. Unpublished data is unverified in the scientific eye, so I have no option but to omit it here. The same rule applies to verbal reports and delivered, but not published, conference reports, regrettably often cited as if they are published references.
- “Grey” literature contributes relatively little to this book. CRM research has generated an enormous “grey” literature, commonly mimeographed or desk-top published for limited circulation. Some reports are even confidential and never distributed at all. Although significant progress in creating repositories for the “grey” literature has been made, much of it is effectively inaccessible to the more general researcher such as myself, even with all the facilities of a great university library system at hand. I have tried to minimize inaccuracies by consulting colleagues in all parts of North America, but some, inevitably, exist.
- World Wide Web sources are used minimally. The Web is a new reality of the archaeological world. Nearly every important site or project has its own Web site, making research a nightmare of transitory postings and constant updates. Although some Web-based research has gone into this edition, I have avoided citing specific Web pages here, on the grounds that they change frequently. The reader is referred to ArchNet and other permanent sites, which provide links to every aspect of archaeology conceivable (<http://archnet.asu.edu>).

CHANGES IN THE FOURTH EDITION

The fourth edition of Ancient North America takes advantage of massive input from colleagues, students, and general readers, who took the trouble to write to me, also of a complex formal and informal review process. Almost all these many critics and reviewers urged minimal overall change to the book, which is now updated throughout. The fourth edition also coincides with the coming of age of Cultural Resource Management, and with new emphases on short-term climatic change and the archaeology of mind. The major changes in this edition include:

- Updates on theory and recent trends (Chapter 3),

- A major revision of Chapter 4, which covers the first settlement of the Americas, to reflect the latest multidisciplinary findings,
- Major revisions of Chapter 12 (the Great Basin) and Chapter 21 (Algonquians and Iroquoians),
- A complete rewrite of the archaeology of European contact (Chapter 22)
- In addition, every chapter has been updated and new references added, where appropriate. Throughout, I have placed emphasis on more general references, as these usually contain bibliographies of more specialized publications. The literature of North American archaeology is becoming increasingly specialized, which means that general readers must rely increasingly on summaries and synthesis as introductions to recent research.

Despite all these revisions, the story in these pages is still very incomplete, at a time when North America's past is under siege from collectors, looters, tourism, and the ravages of industrial civilization. All of us, whether professional archaeologist, avocational enthusiast, or lay person, have a responsibility to be stewards of the past for future generations. If we are not faithful stewards, there is a real danger that our grandchildren will curse us roundly for letting the finite archaeological record vanish.

I urge any reader with comments, criticisms, or suggestions for the next edition to contact me at brian@brianfagan.com. Your insights are much appreciated.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This is the fourth edition of a book that has gone through a fine-grained mesh of page-by-page, line-by-line criticism by many colleagues and students. As such, I flatter myself, probably wrongly, that much of it represents a current consensus at a basic level, within the limitations of space and time. My debt to everyone who has critiqued the third, and earlier, editions in any way is enormous, even to those anonymous correspondents who rejoice in telling you that you are wrong, but without telling you why. The book itself has also benefited greatly from discussions in the field and laboratory with dozens of colleagues on the shores of the Arctic Ocean, in the quiet peace of a prairie valley near Saskatoon, at sites in the heart of Los Angeles, at Chaco Canyon, New Mexico, and on the Channel Islands off the California coast. My notebooks bulge with ideas and insights gleaned from these many encounters, but I cannot possibly thank everyone individually, and hope that they will take this book as a measure of my appreciation. I'm humbled by their dedication to the past, often under very difficult circumstances.

I am very grateful to those friends and colleagues who critiqued the third edition as part of the revision process. They were generous with insights, new data, opinions, references, (and sometimes, even, gossip!). My special thanks to Ken Ames, Doug Bamforth, Roy Carlson, Christopher DeCorse, William Dancey, Max Friesen, John Hart, Tom Hester, Terry Jones, Robert McGhee, Herb Maschner, David Meltzer, George Milner, Steven Simms, Andrew Stewart, and Gwinn Vivian who, among many others, provided critical insights and patiently answered my questions. I only hope that they approve of the final revision. Thank you one and all! Thanks, too, to Colin Ridler and Peter Warner of Thames & Hudson for encouraging me to undertake the fourth edition.

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A NOTE ON RADIOCARBON DATES

Until very recently, few North American archaeologists quoted radiocarbon dates calibrated with tree-rings. Now C14 calibration is becoming increasingly sophisticated, as its range extends into the Early Holocene and corals, varves, and other independent dating approaches are added to dendrochronology. These new calibrations are giving us cause to treat radiocarbon dates earlier than about 9500 BC with great caution, as there is evidence to suggest there is a “plateau” affecting radiocarbon ages in the 11,000 to 14,000-year range. For example, there is now good reason to believe that the Clovis culture of early North America is 2,000 years earlier than thought until very recently (see Chapter 4). Despite these advances in calibration methods, most North American archaeologists still use radiocarbon ages.

I have adopted the following conventions for the purposes of this book:

- Dates earlier than 10,000 BC are quoted in years before present.
- The AD/BC convention is used, not CE/BCE.
- Unless otherwise stated, all dates derived from radiocarbon in this book are radiocarbon ages. Calibrated dates (notably in Chapter 4) are quoted as [cal].
- Calibrated dates are given in a special column in each of the chronological tables.

Radiocarbon Calibration Table	Tree-ring Calibrations	Radiocarbon Age	Calibrated Age in Years using Tree-Rings
		AD 1760 1505 1000 500 1 505 BC 1007 1507 2007 3005 4005 5005 6050 7001 8007 9062	AD 1945 1435 1105 635 15 767 BC 1267 1867 2477 3795 4935 5876 7056 8247 9368 9968
The following table gives calibrated readings for the past 10,000 years, and earlier	AMS Carbon 14 (Barbados) and Uranium/Thorium calibrations	AMS Radiocarbon Dates	Calibrated Age in Years using Uranium/Thorium
		7760 BC 8270 9320 10,250 13,220 14,410 15,280 23,920	9140 BC 10,310 11,150 12,285 16,300 17,050 18,660 28,280

(increasing differences after 25,000 BC [calibrated])

Calibrations based on tables in Radiocarbon 40(3), 1998. It should be stressed that these calibrations are provisional, statistically based, and subject to modification, especially before 7000 BC.