

OBITUARY

WILLIAM THOMAS MULLOY, 1917–1978



Bill Mulloy's death on March 25, 1978, after an incredibly brave 10-month battle against cancer, marked the end of a long love affair—the love of a man for an island and its people, past and present. This was the Pacific island discovered by Jacob Roggeveen on Easter Sunday 1722 and named in honor of the day. Bill's intense feeling for the island was shared with a much loved wife, Emily, three children, and three grandchildren, whom he cared for deeply. Two of the Mulloys' grandchildren, Pancho and Josefina, the son and daughter of their daughter, now Kathleen Hill, can trace half their "roots" to Easter Island, through their father Guillermo Nahoe.

Easter Island, though it came to play such a large part in Bill's life, was not the first area for which he had felt a strong attachment. Much earlier he had been keenly interested in the prehistory of the Southwest and had worked in Utah and New Mexico. Later he devoted many years of effort to the study and interpretation of the lifeways of the prehistoric and historic Indians of the plains and prairies of the western United States and Canada, notably in Wyoming, Montana, and Alberta. His monograph on the Hagen site, Montana, and his report on the McKean and James Allen sites, Wyoming, are classics in the the field of Plains archaeological studies.

Bill received the B.A. degree in anthropology at the University of Utah, then served as Field Archaeologist for the Louisiana State Archaeological Survey from 1938 until 1939, when he began his graduate studies at the University of Chicago. While in graduate school, he also worked in the Dendrochronology Laboratory and did some fieldwork in Tennessee. His anthropological studies were interrupted by military service during World War II. His assignments included training at the Field Artillery Instrument and Survey School, Army Administration Officers Candidate School, and service in Military Intelligence at the Japanese Language School. He continued to serve in the reserves and attained the rank of major. After the war ended, Bill returned to graduate school at the University of Chicago and received the M.A. degree in 1948 and the Ph.D. degree in 1953. His doctoral dissertation, entitled "A Preliminary Historical Outline for the Northwestern Plains," remains a standard work on this topic.

This marked the beginning of a remarkable professional career, which included a great deal of fieldwork in the Plains and in the Pacific and teaching assignments at the University of Wyoming, where he taught from 1948 to 1978, and at the University of Chile, where he served at various times as Visiting Professor and Fulbright Scholar.

Bill was a remarkable teacher. He was truly dedicated to his students, and they reciprocated with admiration and affection. Among the honors linked with his teaching career were the Omicron Delta Kappa award for outstanding teaching, the William Mulloy Commemorative Scholarship established in 1960 by the Wyoming Archaeological Society, the George Duke Humphrey Distinguished Faculty Award in 1964, an invitation to deliver the University of Wyoming Distinguished Faculty Lecture in 1975, and the degree of Doctor of Laws *honoris causa* from the University of Wyoming in 1976. In May 1978 he was posthumously named Distinguished Professor in Anthropology by the trustees of that institution.

In addition to his duties as a professor, Bill made a great contribution to the Department of Anthropology in establishing the Wyoming Anthropological Museum, where he served as curator for the 10 years preceding his death. His personal collection of modern Easter Island folk art now forms part of the collection of the University of Wyoming Art Museum.

During the 1940s and early 1950s, Bill undertook extensive fieldwork in Montana and Wyoming. In 1955 he and I worked together as co-directors of an archaeological survey of Alberta, Canada, under the auspices of the Glenbow Foundation. During that summer I received a letter from Thor Heyerdahl asking if I would recommend an archaeologist to participate in his forthcoming Pacific expedition; Bill was obviously an excellent choice, and he was fascinated by the project. For 10 months he, Carlyle Smith, Edwin Ferdon, and Arne Skjölsvold, along with Gonzalo Figueroa, a student assistant representing Chile, served as archaeologists on the Norwegian Archaeological Expedition. The members of the expedition visited Easter Island, Pitcairn, Tahiti, Rapa Iti, Tubuai, Raivavae, Mangareva, Marquesas, and Cocos.

After Bill returned to the United States, he undertook further fieldwork in Wyoming before embarking on a long-term study of the prehistory and history of Easter Island. He spent a total of over five years there, engaging in survey, excavation, restoration, and research. This involved over 20 trips to the island, traveling by fishing trawler, naval transport, and sailing ketch as well as by most types of military and civilian aircraft. In 1960 he was accompanied by his wife, Emily, and their three children, Kathleen, Brigid, and Patrick, and the family spent a year on the island. His wife accompanied him on a number of later trips.

Among the great monuments investigated and restored by Bill and his colleagues were eight *ahu* and one ceremonial center on Easter Island, Chile, and a fortified village on Rapa Iti in French Polynesia. Funds for these investigations were provided under the Fulbright Act and by the University of Wyoming, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the University of Chile, and the International Fund for Monuments, Inc. The last organization has established the William Mulloy Memorial Fund for continued archaeological research on Easter Island, to which friends and colleagues may contribute.

Other activities linked with the island included serving as lecturer and guide for Lindblad Travel, Inc. Bill also devoted countless hours to writing and discussing Easter Island with editors, research institutions, filmmakers, and journalists and to serving as consultant for such important projects as the film "Easter Island, Puzzle of the Pacific," produced for television by the American Broadcasting Company. This film was shown at the memorial service held at the University of Wyoming.

Emily and Bill's trip to Easter Island in early 1978, which ended only a few weeks before his death, was a time of sadness, for it was obvious that it must be the last, but it also brought him great satisfaction. On February 24 he was declared "Illustrious Citizen of Easter Island for his distinguished and unselfish work on behalf of our community" by the Mayor of Hanga Roa, Juan Edmonds Rapahango. This was the second time this award had been presented; the first recipient was the President of Chile. On this occasion Bill also received an award from the Servicio Nacional de Turismo, presented to him by the director, Liliana Mahn, as "an eminent scientist and great friend of Chile in recognition of his work of investigation of Easter Island."

After Bill returned to Santiago, Minister Don Roberto Kelly Vasquez presented him with an award from the Oficina de Planificación Nacional in recognition of his scientific work on Easter Island. Earlier the Chilean government had conferred on him the "Orden de Don Bernardo O'Higgins en el grado de oficial" for his work on Easter Island restorations.

For Bill it was a great disappointment to know that he would be unable to fulfill his plans to serve as Research Professor at the University of Chile and to direct the work of investigation and

restoration of monuments on Easter Island as Director of the Archaeological Field School, which was scheduled to begin in February 1978 and to continue for five years. However, he was cheered by the knowledge that his work would be ably carried on by his close friends and colleagues Gonzalo Figueroa and Sergio Rapu.

In August 1978 Emily Mulloy, her son Patrick, her daughter Brigid, and Brigid's son Phineas Kelly brought Bill's ashes to Easter Island. Emily has provided the following description of the ceremony held there.

"The ceremony of interment of Bill's ashes and dedication of his memorial took place on August 13, 1978, at Ahu Vai Uri, Tahai, on a hillside overlooking the sea and three of the restored *ahu* forming the Tahai ceremonial center, which was restored during 1967-1970 under his supervision. Far in the distance can also be seen the two restored *ahu* at Hanga Kio'e, restored in 1972. The site and plans for the monument were chosen by his family and co-workers, and all the construction was done by men who had worked with him on archaeological projects. A naturally eroded stone from the statue quarry at Rano Raraku serves as his monument, which will eventually bear a bronze plaque with his name, birth and death dates, and three brief tributes, in English, Spanish, and Rapanui. The ashes were deposited in a stone niche at the foot of the monument and covered with a stone slab.

"Participating in the ceremony was nearly the entire population of Easter Island. A mass was said by the priest Father David Reddy, and eulogies were spoken by the Governor of Easter Island, Arnt Arentsen Pettersen; by the Mayor, Juan Edmonds Rapahango; and by his close friends and colleagues Gonzalo Figueroa and Sergio Rapu, the latter speaking in the Rapanui language. A chorus of islanders sang a selection of hymns in their native language, at least one of which was composed especially for the occasion. Even the weather was cooperative, as this was the first and only sunny day out of a week of rainy weather."

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