

OBITUARY

DOUGLAS SWAIN BYERS 1903–1978

Douglas Swain Byers, archaeologist and Director Emeritus of the Robert S. Peabody Foundation for Archaeology at Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, died in his sleep at Blue Hill, Maine, on Friday, October 27, 1978. The field of archaeology has lost one of its pioneers, and many within the profession have lost a friend who will be long remembered.

Doug came to the Foundation in 1933 and was its director from 1938–1968. Not only did he administer this institution—always under trying conditions—but, more importantly, he helped make it a world-famous archaeological center. He also provided a host of unsung services to the field: he started a series of conferences for the American Anthropological Association, the Society for American Archaeology, and the Tehuacan Expedition as well as arranging for Archaic conference, the Debert conference, and Massachusetts Archaeological Society meetings. He also sponsored other scientists' researches, such as the Tehuacan, Maritime Provinces, and Quebec surveys; the Debert and Yukon Expeditions; and many more. Involved in founding the Society for American Archaeology and its *American Antiquity*, and the Massachusetts Archaeological Society and its *Bulletin*, he served on endless anthropological and archaeological committees. As the editor, he transformed *American Antiquity* from an amateur effort into a professional journal. He was an advisor to hundreds of those interested in archaeology, as well as a trainer of young students. These things he did as well as many, many other things; but except for election as a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, little formal recognition was given him.

Doug was not only a friendly person, giving much of himself to others; he was a topnotch scientist in his own right. He initiated the research on the famous Debert site in Nova Scotia, still one of the oldest (11,000–12,000 B.P.) sites in the eastern United States. He carefully dug a whole series of stratified sites in Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts, and made major contributions to knowledge concerning the eastern Archaic 3,000–7,000 year-old Indian cultures. He dug under the auspices of the Peabody Museum of Harvard in the Southwest with Alfred Kidder, under Henry Roberts at the Sitio Conte site in Panama, and with me in Tehuacan, Mexico; he also conducted social anthropological research with Oliver LaFarge in Guatemala in 1930, and on the Navajo reservation in 1926–1927. Further, he helped start the initial archaeological survey of Massachusetts as well as that for New England. In addition to this he assisted many workers, including myself, in the field and in analysis on a multitude of problems. With his time he was generous to a fault and was always of help with personal as well as professional problems.

Doug published the results of his efforts (see below), and the results were always interesting and well-written. The scientific results were, to quote one of his colleagues, "good, solid stuff, the sort you might expect of a New England gentleman." This could, in part, be said because of his background. He was born January 15, 1903, in Newton Center, Massachusetts, and was



graduated from St. George's School. He received an A.B. degree in 1925 and an A.M. degree in 1928, both from Harvard, and married Dorothy Hayes of Andover in 1929. He was an assistant dean at Harvard from 1929 to 1931 after a brief stint in the banking world, which helped decide on archaeology as his life's work. Thanks to the effort of "Doc" Kidder, the father of American archaeology, he came to Andover in 1933 and was a fine member of the community where he brought up his son, William, and his two daughters, Corinne Dethrow and Majorie Billings. He was a loving father and an even warmer grandfather, and leaves a host of grandchildren, all of whom he loved and helped nurture.

His influence will be long felt, not only by those who knew and loved him, but also by all in the field of archaeology. We owe him a vote of thanks for all he did for all of us, and for which he was never really thanked.

A memorial service was held at Christ Church in Andover on Saturday, November 4, 1978, at 10:30 A.M.

Richard S. MacNeish

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF DOUGLAS SWAIN BYERS

Born

Newton Centre, Massachusetts, January 15, 1903.

Married

Dorothy Hayes, June 15, 1929.

Degrees

A.B., Harvard College, 1925.

Field: History, Government, and Economics; Speciality: Money and Banking.

A.M., Harvard University, 1928; Anthropology

Positions Held

Assistant Dean in Charge of Records, Harvard College, 1929-1931.

Assistant to the Director, Peabody Museum, Harvard, 1931-1933.

Assistant Director, R. S. Peabody Foundation for Archaeology, 1933-1938.

Director, R. S. Peabody Foundation for Archaeology, 1938-1968.

Editor, *American Antiquity*, 1938-1947.

President, Society for American Archaeology, 1947-1948.

Fieldwork

1928-1929: Navajo reservation archaeology with A. V. Kidder, Jr.

1930: Third Tulane Expedition at Jacaltenango, Guatemala.

1931: Sitio Conte, Panama, with the Peabody Museum Cocle Expedition.

1936-1937: Martha's Vineyard.

1937-1939: Nevins Shellheap, Me.

1940-41: Richards Shellheap, Me.

1942: E.D. Prey Site, Me.

1946-1950: Ellsworth Falls, Me.

1950-1955: Bull Brook Site, Ipswich, Ma.

1961-1962: Tehuacan Project, Mexico

1963-1964: Debert Project, Nova Scotia

Bibliography

1931 (with Oliver LaFarge II) *The year-bearer's people*. Department of Middle American Research, Tulane University.

1936 The Department of Archaeology takes the field. *Phillips Bulletin*, October: 26-28.

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- 1946 *The environment in the Northeast*. Phillips Academy, Andover.
- 1954 Bull Brook—a fluted point site in Ipswich, Massachusetts. *American Antiquity* 19:343-351.
- 1955 Additional information on the Bull Brook Site, Massachusetts. *American Antiquity* 20:274-276.
- 1956 Ipswich, B.C. Essex Institute Historical Collections, Essex, Massachusetts.
- 1957 The Bering Bridge—some speculations. *Ethnos* 22:20-26.
- 1959a Five papers on the Archaic stage. *American Antiquity* 24:229-318.
- 1959b The Eastern Archaic: some problems and hypotheses. *American Antiquity* 24:233-256.
- 1962 New England and the Arctic. In *Prehistoric cultural relations between the Arctic and Temperate zones of North America*, edited by John M. Campbell, pp. 143-154. Arctic Institute of North America, Technical Paper 11.
- 1967a (editor). Environment and subsistence, vol. 1, *The prehistory of the Tehuacan Valley*. University of Texas Press, Austin.
- 1967b The region and its people. In Environment and subsistence, vol. 2, *The prehistory of the Tehuacan Valley*. pp. 34-47. University of Texas Press, Austin.
- 1967c Climate and Hydrology. In Environment and subsistence, vol. 1, *The prehistory of the Tehuacan Valley*. pp. 48-67. University of Texas Press, Austin.
- 1967d (editor). The non-ceramic artifacts, vol. 2, *The prehistory of the Tehuacan Valley*. University of Texas Press, Austin.
- 1979 The Nevin Shell Heap: Burials and Observations. *Papers of the Robert S. Peabody Foundation for Archaeology* 9.
- In press The Bull Brook Site. *Bulletin of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society*.