



Review

OREGON ARCHAEOLOGY. Oregon State University Press, Corvallis, 2011. Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. 512 pages. \$29.95 paper. by C. Melvin Aikens, Thomas J. Connolly, and Dennis L. Jenkins

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Oregon Historical Quarterly, Vol. 113, No. 4 (Winter 2012), pp. 607-608

Published by: [Oregon Historical Society](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5403/oregonhistq.113.4.0607>

Accessed: 21/04/2013 01:08

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removal. The scope of the book, radiating outward from the insular tip of the Olympic Peninsula, is impressive. In this sense, *Finding the River* will remain the exemplar in what is sure to become a growing commentary on dam-removal all across America.

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OREGON ARCHAEOLOGY

by C. Melvin Aikens, Thomas J. Connolly, and Dennis L. Jenkins

Oregon State University Press, Corvallis, 2011.
Illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. 512 pages.
\$29.95 paper.

This is the third edition of C. Melvin Aikens's *Oregon Archaeology*. The first was published in 1984 by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). At 134 pages, it was a thick government booklet. The BLM also published the 1993 second edition, with 302 pages and better quality maps and illustrations. The current version, published by Oregon State University Press, is 496 pages long with two new coauthors, Thomas Connolly and Dennis Jenkins. The illustrations are better, although fewer and smaller. The authors are well qualified. Aikens has worked in Oregon and adjacent areas for over thirty-five plus, and his Oregon research focuses on the Great Basin portions of the state. Connolly has conducted research throughout Oregon. Jenkins's work, like Aikens's, has focused on the state's dry central region. The authors are fine scholars and well equipped to write the book. It is clearly no longer possible for a single person to write *Oregon Archaeology*.

Organization has been stable through all editions. The first chapter introduces archaeological methods and reasoning and Oregon's Native cultures. Oregon is divided into five regions based on cultural and environmental divisions, each discussed in a separate chapter.

Chapter 2 covers the southeastern third of Oregon; Chapter 3, the northeastern third of the state; the western third of the state is apportioned among Chapters 4, 5, and 6. Chapter 4 is devoted to the Lower Columbia River and Oregon Coast, Chapter 5 to the Willamette Valley, and Chapter 6 to the Southwestern portion of the state (except the Coast).

These chapters have a standard organization. The region is placed in its environmental and anthropological context and then the archaeology is reviewed, based on discussions of key archaeological sites. The review is strongly empirical, introducing readers to important archaeological sites and providing rich detail. The authors also address cultural, historical, and processual questions. The depth of coverage (and chapter lengths) varies with the extent of the archaeological knowledge of the region and its geographical size. Chapter 2 on the Great Basin portion of Oregon, for example, is 115 pages long, while Chapter 5 on the Willamette Valley is only 44 pages long (far less is known about the valley).

Chapter 7 places the state's archaeology into context by addressing a number of themes and issues that cut across the five regions. These include the state's complex linguistic history, how people were connected to the land, women's roles, trade and interaction, and the impacts of Euro-American colonialism and settlement, among others. The chapter also sketches Cultural Resources Management, the legal and regulatory cultural heritage framework within which virtually all archaeology in Oregon is conducted.

The book is an excellent encyclopedia of Oregon archaeology. As such it is essential to professional archaeologists and heritage managers in Oregon (or adjacent states) as a university-level textbook, and to deeply interested laypersons. It is clearly and simply written, but non-professionals may want to skim the empirical details. The book emphasizes cultural history, so readers looking for theoretical and methodological issues will be

disappointed. This leads me to my major criticism: issues that are in dispute are sometimes treated as if they are settled. Two examples: Chapter 2 incorporates Paisley Cave (which Jenkins excavated), a site producing radiocarbon dates as early as 14,000–14,500 calendar years ago, into the regional cultural chronology. The dates make Paisley Cave among the earliest sites in North America. The dates are controversial, a controversy that should be highlighted but is not. I write this as someone who accepts Paisley Cave's dates and welcomes its inclusion into the region's culture history. Chapter 4 makes a claim that speakers of Chinookan languages expanded up the Columbia River to The Dalles about 1,000 years ago. This is presented as established fact, which it is not. This question is potentially important given claims and disagreements over Native rights to various places and resources along the river. In short, the book needs more doubt or skepticism in its accounts.

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FORGING A FUR EMPIRE: EXPEDITIONS IN THE SNAKE RIVER COUNTRY, 1809–1824

by John Phillip Reid

The Arthur H. Clark Company, Norman, Oklahoma,
2011. Maps, notes, bibliography, index. 240 pages.
\$29.95 cloth.

John Phillip Reid has published path-breaking articles and books on legal aspects of the western North American fur trade, mostly focused on the Pacific Slope during the era of American-British joint occupation in the Oregon Country (1818–1846). *Forging a Fur Empire* deals with the “Snake Country Expeditions” initiated under the auspices of the North West Company and continued after the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) absorbed its

chief rival in 1821. The book also discusses the arrival of American competitors in the Snake River Country.

Reid briefly summarizes the Snake River Country expeditions from 1807 to 1824, then turns his attention to Alexander Ross and his leadership characteristics during the 1824–25 trapping season. Significantly, American trappers first arrived in numbers sufficient to compete against the HBC in the Snake River Country during that time. The American leader of record was Jedediah S. Smith. In the same year, Ross was replaced by Peter Skene Ogden, whose success in the Snake Country has been contrasted with Ross's putative “failure.” The main objective of the book is to demonstrate that Ross's own men — especially the so-called “Iroquois” and “freemen” — caused his failure by “testing the limits of [his] leadership” in ways that made him appear incompetent (p. 10).

Whether lowly hired hands or elite field managers, fur traders were aware of legal principles bearing on property rights, contractual obligations, and reasonable limits on personal risks in the course of their work. Management of contested property rights, personal and community rights, and behavioral norms in the “Indian Country” required an outlook that differed from legal practices east of the Mississippi, where professional lawyers maintained continuity with ancestral legal cultures developed in Europe. Fur-brigade managers had to mesh their prescriptive legal principles with Native American principles of law emanating from their cultural traditions — a failure to do so could have cancelled or reduced the profits they avidly sought.

Casting Ross as his central figure enables Reid to examine organizational, social, and economic aspects of the Snake River Country expeditions as well as labor and management conflicts that affected the potential for profit. HBC executive Sir George Simpson characterized Ross as an incompetent weakling who failed to lead his rough and rowdy engagés and “freemen,” many of whom were mixed-blood