

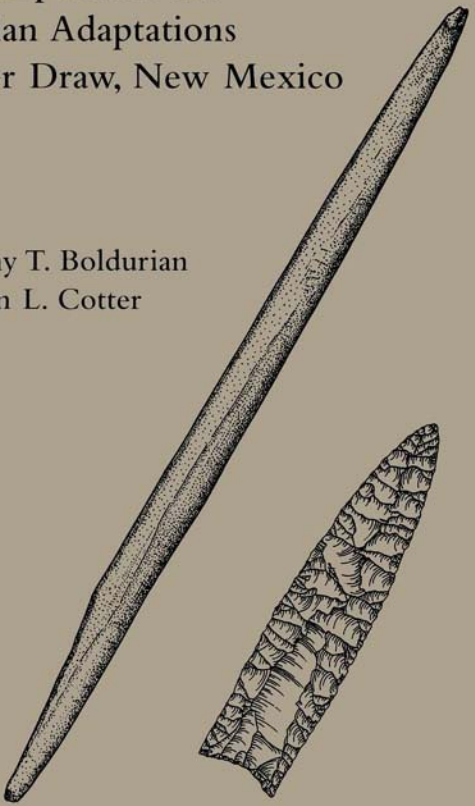


Clovis Revisited

New Perspectives on Paleoindian Adaptations from Blackwater Draw, New Mexico



Anthony T. Boldurian
John L. Cotter





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Frontispiece. Edgar B. Howard (foreground) excavating mammoth bones at the Clovis gravel pit, summer 1933.

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by

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Dedication

To Edgar Billings Howard 1887–1943

Pioneer investigator

of early humans in North America 1929–1941

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Foreword

Often more than just an occupation to its practitioners, archaeology sometimes fulfills the dreams of those who spend countless hours and tremendous energy over the span of their career in pursuit of knowledge about humankind's past. Born of simple curiosity, the search occasionally develops into a consuming quest to solve very difficult problems. Edgar B. Howard's exploration for evidence of the earliest Americans was such a journey, taking the scientist far from his starting point to strange, unforeseen places. Along the way he encountered numerous interesting individuals, while the work itself entailed myriad frustrations punctuated by simply wonderful discoveries. By all accounts, it turned out to be a true adventure. Despite his breakthroughs, however, other mysteries persisted that he never had a chance to resolve.

The opportunity for me, so many years after the fact, to retrace Howard's steps toward the discovery of Clovis culture has been an adventure in itself. Traveling the bumpy trails of the Guadalupe Mountains, scaling the steep and thorny cliff below Burnet Cave, and standing amid the panorama of flatness on the Llano Estacado while supervising my own excavations at Clovis helped me capture some of that which Howard experienced. Meeting and speaking with people across the country who worked beside Howard and admired him, as well as poring over his published articles and correspondence at the Academy of Natural Sciences and the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, have granted me insight into his motivations and thoughts. Finally, working with the Clovis type-specimen artifacts has added special relevance and closure to these various activities.

This sense of adventure has extended to the artifact analysis in a highly personal way. Working with these materials has fulfilled a dream that began at the age of 11 during my first visit to the University Museum on Penn's campus, only a mile from my South Philadelphia neighborhood. Tall, masterfully carved Maya stele from Guatemala, the famous "Ram in the Thicket" gold-and-lapis statuette among other dazzling treasures from the 4,500-year-old Royal Cemetery at Ur in Sumeria, and superbly preserved mummies from Egypt—it was all quite overwhelming. Of the many exhibits with their fabulous artifacts from all over the ancient world, the most lasting impression was made on me by a handful of stone objects under glass in the Museum's North American gallery. There on display were the Clovis artifacts, the *actual* tools used by Native Americans more than ten thousand years ago in New Mexico to hunt humongous mammoth and bison of the Ice Age. The opportunity to hold and examine the same artifacts that during childhood inspired me to pursue a career in archaeology has been an exceptional one. Among the host of recollections raised by the experience is the raw fascination that images of the Clovis paleohunters ignited in the mind of a youngster.

John Cotter and I believe that it would be impossible to gain a holistic view of the original Clovis artifacts in the absence of a retrospective of Howard's expeditions. Contributing to the collection's archaeological uniqueness are details on where the artifacts were discovered, how they were collected, and why they were recognized as holding great scientific importance over 60 years ago. Therefore, in the first chapter, we have tried to provide the necessary historical context for evaluating the collection. Thereafter, we have attempted to describe and reassess the original Clovis artifacts in light of contemporary knowledge on North American Paleoindians.

Anthony T. Boldurian