RIPLEY PIERCE BULLEN, 1902-1976



Ripley P. Bullen, Curator Emeritus at the Florida State Museum, University of Florida, died in Gainesville December 25, 1976, at the age of 74. Although often associated with Florida and Southeastern archaeology, his professional interests and research encompassed, additionally, New England, the American Southwest, the Lesser Antilles, Greater Antilles, and Central America. His bibliography reflects a prodigious investigator whose tireless efforts have substantially advanced the understanding of New World prehistory.

Ripley was born in Winthrop, Massachusetts, on September 21, 1902, the son of Dana Ripley Bullen and Bessie Louise Pierce. With interests in both archaeology and engineering, he graduated from Schenectady High School, New York, in 1921. Choosing engineering as his major field of study, he entered Cornell University and received an M.E. degree in mechanical engineering in 1925. He began work with the General Electric Company that same year, and for the next 15 years

he was involved first in engineering research and then sales in New York and Massachusetts. In Massachusetts he met his future wife, Adelaide Kendall; they were married in 1929. During this time period his earlier archaeological interest persisted and actively manifested itself in the excavation (1939–1940) of a steatite quarry near Worcester, Massachusetts, in his activities as one of the organizers (1939) of the Massachusetts Archaeological Society, and in his presentations of research results at local and professional meetings, including the Society for American Archaeology.

By 1940 his expanding interest in archaeology was such that he left General Electric for the staff of the Robert S. Peabody Foundation for Archaeology at Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts. He also began graduate work in anthropology at Harvard University and became a Teaching Fellow (1943–1945). During 1941 he attended the University of New Mexico archaeological field school and worked in and around Chaco Canyon. While at the R.S. Peabody Foundation, he undertook, with characteristic energy, numerous excavations and surveys and established the basic cultural chronology for eastern Massachusetts. During his 8 years in Andover, Ripley published a prolific 38 articles covering his Precolumbian and historical excavations, artifact classification, and field methods. His 1944 integration of thorough archival and excavation techniques in the investigation of the eighteenth-century Black Lucy's Garden in Andover constitutes an early model of modern historical archaeology. He also taught classes and made frequent presentations to the Massachusetts Archaeological Society and at professional meetings.

In 1948 Ripley accepted the position of Assistant Archaeologist with the Florida Board of Parks and Historic Memorials in Gainesville, Florida. He began a broad program of research and, in the year of his arrival, helped found the Florida Anthropological Society and its journal, *The Florida Anthropologist*. During the next 4 years he published 27 papers reporting current investigations throughout the state.

In 1952 the Florida Park Service discontinued its archaeological program, transferring its collections and data to the Florida State Museum, which was reorganized and a new Department of Social Sciences established. Ripley was appointed the first curator of Social Sciences and became department chairman, a post to which he applied his energies for 17 years.

Perhaps diagnostic of his view of professionalism was his ready accessibility and rapport with

a wide range of people, professional colleagues and amateurs alike. One never wrote to Ripley without receiving a reply, and most often a very thorough one. He was exceedingly generous with his knowledge and time and came to be highly regarded throughout Florida and the diverse regions where he worked. Under his tutelage, the Florida Anthropological Society grew to be one of the most active of the regional societies. Editing its journal (a job he began in 1970) consumed much of his time, but he kept standards among the highest for such publications. Unquestionably, his impact upon the society and interested laymen led to a more positive activism throughout the state that resulted in the preservation of many important sites and the recording of otherwise inaccessible data.

In 1956 he initiated and began editing the monograph series, Contributions of the Florida State Museum, Social Sciences. His numerous Florida excavations brought large scientific collections to the Museum, and his influence with interested Floridians led to sizeable artifact donations. The growth was rapid, and soon the new Social Sciences Department was cramped for space; by 1969, the year he retired as chairman, 70,000 North American items had been added to the collections.

Ripley's research in Florida resulted in the recording of hundreds of archaeological sites. It also brought about a refinement of cultural chronology, especially the Florida Orange period (2000–1200 B.C.), whose fiber-tempered pottery particularly interested him. He also delineated the Transitional period (1200–500 B.C.) in Florida. His effective use of radiocarbon dating, which he was the first to utilize in Florida, greatly helped in clarifying and extending the culture sequence. Extensive analysis of lithic artifacts led to his definitive A Guide to the Identification of Florida Projectile Points, now in its second editon.

In the field, Ripley had a talent for locating and excavating sites with long sequential occupations. One of his major regions of concentration was the central Gulf coast of Florida. Numerous excavations focused on the Safety Harbor culture, the archaeological manifestation of the prehistoric and historic Tocobagas. Ripley also excavated and reported on a number of earlier central peninsular Gulf coast sites, some dating from the Archaic period. At the Palmer site he found a 2000 B.C.–1100 A.D. culture sequence and an unusual alligator burial, which he interpreted as a totemic interment. Another area of endeavor was east Florida, including the Atlantic coast north of Cape Canaveral and the St. Johns River Valley. Here he refined and radiocarbondated the culture sequence from 3500 B.C. to the historic period. He produced important data on the seasonality of the historic Timucuan peoples and their evolution from the earlier Archaic hunters and gatherers.

At Crystal River, on the northern peninsular Gulf coast of Florida, Ripley encountered in 1951, 1960, and 1964–1965, non-Southeastern features that suggested outside contact. Here he excavated plaza-mound arrangements reminiscent of lowland Mesoamerica and identified 3 stelae. Radiocarbon dates indicated a 30 B.C.–1200 A.D. occupation and an approximate 440 A.D. date for the stelae. Realizing the necessity for preserving the site, he effectively suggested to state legislators and the Florida Park Board the creation of a museum and park. He reconstructed the mounds to conform as nearly as possible to their original contours, which had been disturbed by early twentieth century investigations and earth removal. In 1962 a large park was established and later a museum. For the latter he spent considerable time organizing the archaeological materials for exhibits and preparing data for a scale model of the site.

Although Ripley had examined trade contacts with the Mississippian area and general Southeastern relationships in the course of his research, the nature of possible prehistoric contact with the islands of the Caribbean remained unknown. After excavations at Castle Windy and Green Mound in East Florida in 1956–1957, he became increasingly concerned with the Caribbean. He began preliminary arrangements to examine sites in Cuba, but political events obligated him to work elsewhere. He began actual fieldwork during 1959 in the Virgin Islands and the following year excavated an important site at Krum Bay, St. Thomas, and surveyed St. John. Here his work was initially in collaboration with Frederick W. Sleight of the Central Florida Museum and took place under the additional sponsorship of the Florida State Museum, William L. Bryant Foundation, and the National Park Service.

His work in the Lesser Antilles documented an involved cultural chronology beginning with the first ceramics about 200 B.C. He saw influences in this sequence, first from northeastern Venezuela, then from the Greater Antilles, and finally (about 1200 A.D.) from the expanding Island Caribs (Suazey), who probably originated in the Guianas. One of his intriguing conclusions concerning the Greater Antilles was the probability of an early peopling from Honduras and Nicaragua via Jamaica. He also concluded that there was no preceramic or early ceramic period migration from Florida to the Antilles.

During 1963 he examined preceramic sites in Honduras and documented early stone tools at elevated locations in the interior. Without neglecting his Florida research, extensive museum exhibits, and editing duties, he continued to expand his Caribbean investigations. He undertook major island-wide projects in Grenada, Barbados, St. Vincent, the Grenadines, and St. Lucia. By 1967, he also examined or excavated sites in St. Croix, Martinique, Marie Galante, Guadeloupe, St. Martin, Trinidad, Tobago, Curacao, Aruba, Guyana, Surinam, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and the Bahamas.

Ripley was a regular participant, with his wife Adelaide, a physical and cultural anthropologist, in numerous international conferences. He gave papers at the International Congress of Americanists (San José, Vienna, Mexico City, Barcelona, Lima, and Rome), at the World Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences (Paris, Moscow, Tokyo, and Kyoto), and at the International Congress for the Study of Pre-Columbian Cultures of the Lesser Antilles (Martinique, Barbados, Grenada, St. Lucia, Antigua, and Guadeloupe). He reorganized the Lesser Antilles conferences and edited 5 of their *Proceedings*. He also was invited to participate in special conferences on petroglyphs (sponsored by the Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh, in 1975) and on Mesoamerica, (sponsored by Christ's College, Cambridge University, in 1972).

His consistent fieldwork, editorial endeavors, and willingness to share information were recognized by his colleagues in the Caribbean, and he was elected Chairman for Life of the International Congress of the Lesser Antilles. His concern for cultural origins in the Caribbean led him to study artifacts in diverse locations, including Jomon pottery in Japan in 1968, early pottery in Colombia in 1969, and Antillian material at the Danish National Museum during 1964.

In 1969 Ripley retired as the Chairman of the Department of Social Sciences, Florida State Museum, though he continued his curatorial duties as well as his preparation of *The Florida Anthropologist*, the *Proceedings*, and "Current Research" of the Caribbean for *American Antiquity*. He also kept up his writing and continued his fieldwork, both in Florida and the Caribbean, working at several central Florida sites and on St. Vincent, the Grenadines, Martinique, and Puerto Rico. In 1973 he retired from the Department but, as Curator Emeritus, continued to use his office and facilities in the Museum where he could be found working daily.

On March 20, 1976, the University of Florida awarded Ripley an honorary Doctor of Science degree in recognition of his distinguished career and exceptional service to the University. He accepted the degree in his unpretentious way and continued his strenuous program of manuscript preparation. He edited and prepared numerous manuscripts during 1976, working regularly to within a few days of his death. He conscientiously made provisions for transferring his editorships of The Florida Anthropologist, and Proceedings of the International Congress of the Lesser Antilles and contributing editorship in archaeology for the Handbook of Latin American Studies. He also arranged for final completion of any manuscripts he might not finish.

Ripley's amiable personality and modesty, together with his great competence, earned him hundreds of friends throughout the United States and the Caribbean. He was always sought out at meetings and could be found in the midst of discussion with old colleagues and neophytes alike. Undaunted by controversy, he would always speak out and added new dimensions to many interpretations. Entertainment at the Bullens' well-appointed home in Gainesville was invariably extremely hospitable and was the high point of visits by many colleagues over the years. One never failed to sense his enthusiasm and availability in both formal and informal situations. To me, and to many, it was an enlightening privilege to have known him.

Ripley is survived by his wife, Adelaide K. Bullen (Research Associate in Anthropology, Florida State Museum); 2 sons, Dana Ripley II and Pierce Kendall; and 4 grandchildren.

(This obituary and the bibliography compiled by Adelaide K. Bullen will also be included in the proceedings of the Seventh International Congress for the Study of Pre-Columbian Cultures of the Lesser Antilles, held in honor of Ripley in Caracas, Venezuela, 1977.)

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^{*}This bibliography is as complete as possible at this time. Please send corrections or additions for future inclusion to Adelaide K. Bullen, Florida State Museum, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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