

Archaeology in Washington

by Ruth Kirk and Richard D. Daugherty

University of Washington Press, 2007

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The opening chapter of *Archaeology in Washington* informs us that our state contains the remains of actions committed by humans 14,000 years ago. These men and women were a hungry people. They butchered a mastodon in the Olympic Peninsula, cooked with earth ovens in the Pend Oreille country, and hunted in the area that is now used to treat Seattle's raw sewage. Often, there's a lot of earth between the traces of early human hunger and us. Prehistorical human activities, desires, weapons, and bones have been buried by thousands of years of mudslides, forest life, and small and tremendous geological eruptions. The job of archaeologists is to remove this layer of earth that separates us from them, the long dead who were unfortunate enough to be born in a land that was so inhuman, so indifferent, so senseless.

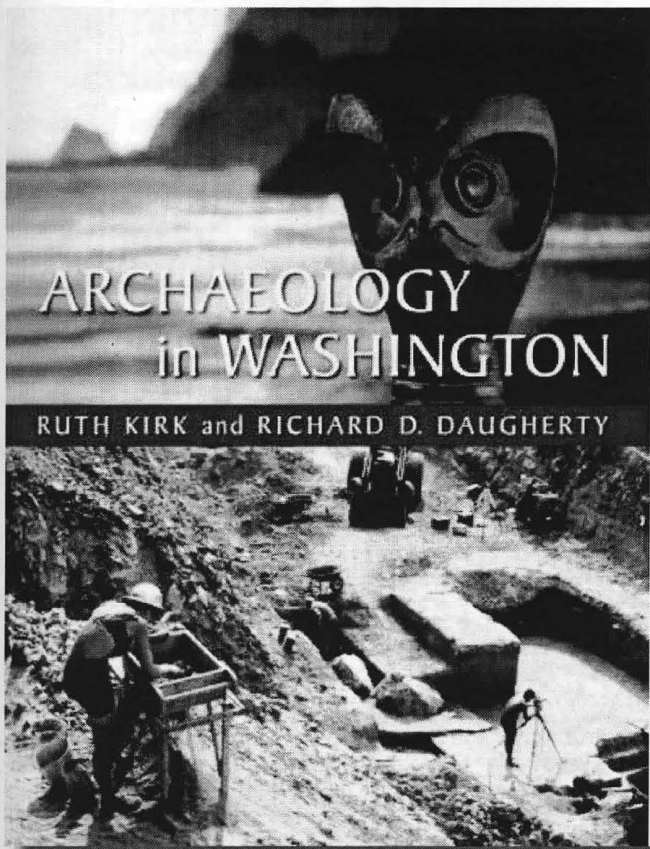
What's striking about the photographs in *Archaeology in Washington*—photographs of archaeological sites around the state—is not, however, the remains of the dead, but the bodies of the living scientists and students. Most of them appear to be young, and because they are digging up dirt all day, all month, all year, their bodies are in excellent shape. And because they often have to work in hot places, they wear as little as decency allows. These archaeologists are sexy.

Look at the cover of the book, look at the flesh of the woman in the foreground and the two young men in the depths of the excavation site: Their skin has been ripened and browned by the life-rich rays of the sun. Inside the book, you will find more images of young and bronzed beauties removing earth, shifting dirt, separating human from natural objects. A thousand years from now, this is whom we want to unearth and clean our dirty femurs and skulls: shapely archaeologists wearing tight, short pants.

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(If someone would like to contribute a more archaeological perspective of this book, contact the Reviews Editor).



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1990 Objects as Meaning; or Narrating the Past. In *Objects of Knowledge*, edited by S. Pearce, pp. 125-140. Athlone Press, London.

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