

FROM THE ARCHIVES

As part of our 100th Anniversary Celebration, David Wilcox is contributing several articles on the deep history of AAHS. Here is the third.

How the AAHS Helped Dean Cummings Realize His Game Plan, 1916–1921

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Beginning with a series of public lectures on “Prehistoric Arizona” in the spring of 1916, Byron Cummings attracted a group of 60 citizens who founded the Arizona Archaeological Society (later to become the Arizona Archaeological and Historical Society [AAHS]), whose first formal meeting was on May 15, 1916 (AAHS Archives). A study of the archives and other sources has resulted in the compilation of data tables of all recorded members and programs from 1916 to 1956, with endnotes about who these people were as well as other contextual information. Some of this information was found using the website “Chronicling America” (Wilcox 2016). Copies of these files have been copyrighted and placed in the Arizona State Museum (ASM) Library.

Based on these data and other studies (for example, Bostwick 2006; Thompson 2005; Wilcox 2005), a fresh assessment can be made of how AAHS helped Dean Cummings achieve the game plan he brought to Tucson from Utah in 1915 (see February 2016 *Glyphs* [Vol. 66, No. 8]). Most fundamentally, we can see that Cummings appealed to a broad audience of civically engaged people whose membership and support for AAHS multiplied their influence in other groups. One of the most significant was the Federated Women’s Clubs of Arizona (FWCA).

In Utah, Cummings had been a Dean of Men and of Arts and Letters, as well as head of the Utah Board of Education and of the University’s medical school for awhile. His wife, Isabel McLaury Cummings, was highly active in the Utah women’s clubs and literary societies, and when she came to Arizona, she soon became president

of the Tucson Woman’s Club and was active statewide (*Arizona Republican* 1919a; *Bisbee Daily Review* 1916). The agenda of the FWCA was well stated in the *Arizona Republican* (1902:3), the year of their founding:

it therefore devolves upon us in large measure to see to it that science, history, literature, music, art and all the refinements of civilization be not neglected amid the stress of new environment. More than this, ... the preservation of our archaeological heritage of our Indian legends, and of our pioneer history, all await and greatly need the attention that it is our special province to bestow, and that as an organized body we have the power to give.

Clearly, these objectives perfectly matched those of Dean Cummings, who, at the University of Arizona, again soon became a Dean of Men and of Arts, Letters and Sciences, a team player who was also named Acting President, 1920–1921, in the absence of President von KleinSmid, who was in Mexico and Latin America. Cummings also assumed other civic responsibilities, further broadening his social alliances (*Arizona Republican* 1919b; *Coconino Sun* 1920). It is little wonder that in June 1921, he was one of four distinguished Arizonans awarded a LL.D. degree by the University of Arizona.

On a more practical level, AAHS helped the Dean by purchasing for use on his expeditions, on credit, an “archaeological” Ford from AAHS member Monte Mansfield (Johnson 1966). They also purchased collections for ASM, most notably the Joshua Miller collection in 1917.

Preserving Tumacacori Mission became the primary project for AAHS, after arrangements were made to have the mission’s central 10 acres deeded to the federal government so that the newly established National Park Service could take charge of it. AAHS also eagerly listened to 5-minute student reports each October and the Dean’s longer exposition on their results, admired the displays of new artifacts, and acted as hostesses or hosts, serving light refreshments during the social hour after the talks, following the lead Cummings had initiated in Utah (*Salt Lake City Herald-Republican* 1909), and

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that was followed at Arizona women's club meetings (*Arizona Republican* 1909).

The Dean's expeditions were well covered by many Arizona newspapers. Phoenix's *Arizona Republican* (1916b), for example, not only announced the AAHS meeting during which a local boy, Karl Ruppert, was to speak, it (*Arizona Republican* 1916a) also printed a long, detailed report about Ruppert's first archaeological experience.

Another student, Edith Neuman, told her hometown newspaper (*Bisbee Daily Review* 1920) about her amazement that a Navajo chief near Navajo Mountain had offered Professor Cummings 30 ponies for her! Their 1920 excursion to Tayenda Mesa (now called Cummings Mesa) was described by the Dean in the *American Anthropologist* (Cummings 1922). The Dean had joined the American Anthropological Association in 1908, and remained a loyal member into his 90s.

Politically, AAHS also acted to further the Dean's game plan. In January 1917, a committee was formed that included AAHS president Cummings and nine other members who were prominent Arizona citizens: Tucson banker Charles P. Solomon, Tucson businessmen Thomas K. Marshall and John S. Bayless, University of Arizona President von Klein Smid, University of Arizona professors I. J. Butler and A. O. Neal, Phoenix Episcopal Bishop Julius Atwood, and northern Arizona businessmen E. C. Clark and George Babbitt. They wrote to the U.S. Secretary of the Interior, respectfully suggesting he reserve all antiquities permits in Arizona to ASM and the Bureau of American Ethnology. If there was a reply, I have not yet seen it.



Isabel Cummings (left), standing with Byron Cummings in 1917 (*Arizona Historical Society CP29, F.21A*).

Cummings, however, had already expressed his state's rights values in the University of Arizona Catalog (*University of Arizona Record* 1916:30). He urged the people of Arizona to give any relics they might acquire to the ASM, because they "belong here in the environment in which they were produced and where they will be accessible to the students and people of the commonwealth." Among the many citizens endorsing these values was seven-time Arizona Governor George Wiley Peter Hunt, who not only became one of the early donors to ASM in 1916, but whom, by 1923, had become a lifetime member of AAHS.

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